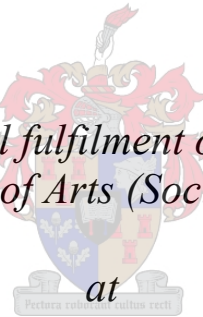


Continuity and change after apartheid: A study of racial categories among white people in a rural area of the Western Cape

by

Handri Walters

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Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Supervisor: Professor C.S. van der Waal

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

March 2012

Abstract

The 1994 election seems to stand as a clear divide between past and present in South Africa. But while it was believed that this election would catapult South Africa into a promising new era of democracy and equality, it has become all too clear that the transition was unfortunately limited to the political sphere. Despite some progress being made in the economic sphere, we still have a visible correlation between race and class – a correlation that certainly stems from the apartheid era, signifying a definite continuity of an era long past. In the social sphere we have also struggled to achieve complete integration. We find that racial categories of old have remained an important part of the ‘new’ South Africa. While we were promised a non-racial country, government policies such as Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment have been a constant reminder of supposed racial differences – signifying another continuity of apartheid.

While the post-apartheid period can be summarised as a period of change, we find that it can also be summarised by the continuities of the past. It was found that, specifically in my research area, a rural farmers’ community, the continuities of the past are visible in the everyday structures of society. For my research subjects, white Afrikaners, it was found that the 1994 election proved to be no ‘road to Damascus’ regarding beliefs about the racial other. I found that interracial social interaction is still governed by fixed racial boundaries that are rarely crossed and, if crossed, this is done so conditionally. These boundaries seemed to be reinforced by the active socialisation of a community. While many argue that the post-apartheid period has brought on an identity crisis for white Afrikaners, I found that my research subjects have failed to encounter such a crisis, as they have held on to fixed racial boundaries in an attempt to preserve and protect their identity.

We find ourselves in a time where we are urged to move beyond our apartheid past, yet many are unable to do so. But the question remains: given our past, should this come as a surprise to anyone?

Opsomming

Die verkiesing van 1994 staan as 'n duidelike skeiding tussen die verlede en die hede in Suid-Afrika. Maar al is daar geglo dat hierdie verkiesing Suid-Afrika in 'n belowende nuwe era van demokrasie en gelykheid sou inskiet, het dit al hoe meer duidelik geraak dat die oorgang ongelukkig tot die politieke sfeer beperk was. Ten spyte van vordering in die ekonomiese sfeer, vind ons nog steeds dat daar 'n sigbare ooreenkoms tussen ras en klas is – 'n ooreenkoms wat seer seker geërf is vanaf apartheid en dui op 'n definitiewe voortsetting van 'n era wat lankal verby is. In die sosiale sfeer sukkel ons ook om volkome integrasie te bereik. Ons vind dat die rasse-kategorieë van ouds steeds 'n belangrike deel van die 'nuwe' Suid Afrika bly. Hoewel 'n nie-rassige land belowe is, dien regeringsbeleide soos Regstellende Aksie en Swart Ekonomiese Bemagtiging as 'n konstante herinnering aan sogenaamde rasseverskille – nog 'n voortsetting van apartheid.

Terwyl die post-apartheid tydperk opgesom kan word as 'n tydperk van verandering, vind ons dat dit ook opgesom kan word deur voortsettings van die verlede. Veral in my navorsingsgebied, 'n plattelandse boeregemeenskap, het ek gevind dat die voortsettings van die verlede sigbaar was in die alledaagse strukture van die samelewing. Vir my navorsingssubjekte, blanke Afrikaners, is dit gevind dat die 1994-verkiesing geensins gedien het as 'n 'pad na Damaskus' in terme van oortuigings aangaande die 'ander' ras nie. Ek het gevind dat interrassige sosiale interaksie steeds regeer word deur gevestigde rasse grense wat selde oorgesteek word, en indien wel oorgesteek, word dit voorwaardelike gedoen. Dit wil voorkom of hierdie grense versterk word deur die aktiewe sosialisering van die gemeenskap. Terwyl baie outeurs argumenteer dat die post-apartheidtydperk 'n identiteitskrisis vir blanke Afrikaners tot gevolg gehad het, het ek gevind dat my navorsingssubjekte nie so 'n krisis ervaar het nie omdat hulle vasklou aan gevestigde rassegrense in 'n poging om hul identiteit te bewaar en beskerm.

Ons vind onself in 'n tyd waar ons aangespoor word om verby ons apartheid verlede te beweeg, maar steeds is baie mense nie in staat om dit te doen nie. Die vraag bly staan: gegewe ons verlede, kom dit vir enigiemand as 'n verrassing?

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First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor Kees van der Waal for supporting me throughout this process, providing insights and guidance and unending support. My work, as well as myself, were shaped by his critique, comments, and words of encouragement. Most of all, I would like to thank him for taking a chance on me and for his unwavering belief in my ability. He saw something in me that even I failed to see. For that I remain ever grateful.

I wish to thank the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology for giving me the opportunity to pursue this degree. I have enjoyed tremendous support from a number of individuals in this department who have helped shape this body of work. Their insights and comments are greatly appreciated.

...and soon now we shall go out of the house and go into the convulsion of the world, out of history, into history and the awful responsibility of time.

- Robert Penn Warren, 1946

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 A post-apartheid setting

It seems as if, for the last 17 years at least, every South African narrative starts with apartheid and the official democratic transition that began with the 1994 elections and ultimately launched this country into the new era of post-apartheid. What this transition in essence signified was the promise of widespread change in all aspects of society. Today, the reality is that this transition has been slow to take effect in the broader South African society.

In 1994, for the first time since the arrival of white people in South Africa, the entire population was placed on an equal footing. Before this day, a definite hierarchy, arranged according to specified racial categories – white people positioned at the top and black people at the bottom, had been in place for centuries. Although the 1994 election led to the integration of all races¹ under a power-sharing government, the existing social hierarchy could not have disappeared over three short days in April, for the transition seemed to have been limited to the political sphere. While some changes have been witnessed in the economic sphere, race and class still correlate to a large extent in the new South Africa. Such a correlation does not only exist within my research area, but also within the broader South African population. In 1998, President Thabo Mbeki described South Africa as having ‘two nations: the one black and the other white’ – the one being ‘relatively prosperous’ and the other being ‘black and poor’ (Nattrass and Seekings, 2001:45). This revelation spoke of the still striking correlation of race and class² in post-apartheid South Africa. While some would argue that income and race do

¹ Upon careful consideration it was decided not to use quotation marks when using the term race. However, this decision was made purely based on stylistic simplification and in no way implies that I believe such a category to exist in any biological sense.

² The concept of class has been used to refer to ‘a group of people who share common “life chances” or market positions, common positions within status hierarchies, or common positions within authority or power structures’ (Wright, 1978:1369). In contrast to such uses, Marxists define this concept ‘in terms of common structural positions within the social organization of production’ (Wright, 1978:1370).

not necessarily adhere strictly to the two-nations model,³ it is true that due to South Africa's history of apartheid, 'there is still a strong correlation between race and household income' (Nattrass and Seekings, 2001:49). It was during this notorious period of South African history that the most skilled jobs were reserved for whites only, overall wages were determined by the colour of a person's skin, not to mention the failure of the education system for the racial other and the implications coupled with this (Nattrass and Seekings, 2001:51). Marais (2001:199) concluded in his study that '65 per cent of white households slot into the top income quintile (or fifth)', while 'one finds 23 per cent of all African households in the poorest quintile, compared with 11 per cent of coloureds'. His work, fittingly titled *Limits to Change*, speaks volumes about the limited effects of democratisation and the subsequent nationwide transition. It illustrates how the transition was in essence only of a political nature and failed to translate into the economic sphere, thus concluding that the main source of social stratification in South Africa remains race and not class.

The transition has also been slow to take effect in the social sphere – possibly, in part, due to a strong correlation between race and class. It is specifically the lack of social transition that becomes the focus of my research. Racial boundaries, I found, are still mostly kept intact, especially within my research area – a small farmers' community reliant on coloured and black labour. The existing hierarchy, still resembling a racial hierarchy, seems to be perpetuated in my research area. When Dubow (1992:210) spoke of Afrikaners, he argued that 'notions of superiority, exclusivity and hierarchy have long existed as more or less conscious habits of mind'. This is specifically true in rural areas, where, according to Schutte (1995:189), 'the chance that whites will encounter blacks on an equal footing is relatively small'. This is mostly due to the typical roles that blacks and coloureds occupy in rural society. In the words of Schutte (1995:189), 'rural blacks mostly occupy the most menial of roles' – acting as farm labourers on white-owned

³ According to Nattrass and Seekings (2001:47), 'South African society cannot simply be divided into rich and poor, as if the distribution of incomes were bipolar'. It is rather argued that 'it is most accurate to see [South Africa] in terms of three broad classes, not two racially define nations: an increasingly multiracial upper class, comprising not just high-profile corporate figures but much more broadly the professional, managerial, and business classes; a "middle" class of mostly urban, employed workers; and a marginalized class of outsiders, comprising many of the unemployed as well as workers in agricultural and domestic employment' (Nattrass and Seekings, 2001:66).

farms, and domestics and gardeners in white households. I found that this conclusion resembled my own observations.

Driving through the mountains, a valley suddenly unveils itself covered in a blanket of green as far as the eye can see – that is until the green is stopped in its tracks by yet more mountains. Above, a crisp and clear blue sky looms throughout the hot summer months, until it meets its demise upon the onset of the usually icy cold and rainy winters – a climate that provides the perfect conditions for this area's thriving deciduous fruit production. It is truly an idyllic scene, Eden unfolding in front of your eyes.⁴

The valley of Eden is situated in the Western Cape and thrives on a successful and diverse farming industry – ranging from fruit and vegetables to corn and stock-farming. Stretching from mountain to mountain, this valley is about 650 square kilometres in size and hosts a total population of about 46 000. A statistical breakdown of population groups reveals that whites comprise only about 12.5% of the total population, coloureds about 68.5%, and blacks 18.5%.⁵ Farmville, a fairly small rural town, is situated at the centre of all farming activity and forms the business centre of this valley. Historically, Eden has always been associated with farming. Since the first white settlers came here to pursue stock-farming because of the ideal grazing lands in the eighteenth century, to corn-growing, and finally the establishment of fruit orchards, this has always been farmland and Farmville has always been the centre of all activity. Apart from Farmville, there are two even smaller towns (one having mainly white citizens; the other an exclusively coloured town), and two informal settlements (with mainly black residents), all within a 12 kilometre radius of the main business centre. Similarly to Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses and Seekings (2010:23),⁶ I found that apartheid was 'echoed in the continuing relationship between race, neighbourhood and class'. My initial observation

⁴ In order to protect the identity of the area, as well as those of its inhabitants (my research subjects), pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis.

⁵ The source of this information will not be cited in order to protect the identity of my research area.

⁶ I came across this very recent publication during the final stages of writing this thesis and found the themes of *Growing up in the new South Africa: Childhood and adolescence in post-apartheid Cape Town* to be very close to those I address in this thesis. Yet the context of my study (conducting research in a rural area) is different than the research conducted by Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses and Seekings (2010). I specifically found their insights on the lingering correlation between race and class in South Africa very interesting and helpful.

was that a spatial divide, drawn according to racial categories resembling those outlined in the Population Registration Act⁷ of the old apartheid government, is clearly visible in my research area. By no means do I imply that such a divide is lawfully enforced in my research area, but rather that it becomes evident that, in the spatial divide of this area, there are continuities of the apartheid structures of old found in a post-apartheid context.

Based on my initial observations I came to the conclusion that, although the 1994 democratic elections and the subsequent transition of power stand as somewhat of a watershed in South African history, proving to be a dividing line between past and present, in my research area the continuities of the past are clearly visible, based purely on the spatial arrangement of the towns and neighbourhoods mentioned above. But many people anticipated such a situation in South Africa. In 1991, Giliomee and Schlemmer (1991:191) argued that, with such deeply institutionalised social structures as was the case in apartheid South Africa, ‘sudden shifts in societal patterns are not likely to occur’. In 1995, one year after the transition, Schutte (1995:80) found that ‘the effects of apartheid legislation have crystallized in physical structures, geographic arrangements, and human values to such an extent that they will guide human interaction and pattern social life in South Africa for many years to come’. Almost two decades later I had to arrive at the same conclusion. It became clear to me that the historically constructed racial categories have survived the official demise of apartheid. It proved to be at least one identified continuity of apartheid rule in post-apartheid South Africa. Such a conclusion sparked my interest in the everyday relations between the different social categories within my research area. Were there other continuities to be found?

Although my study area consists mainly of farms, it is also home to a variety of towns, ranging from middle class neighbourhoods to informal settlements (as described earlier). This area is home to Afrikaners, as the term is used in this research (a matter that will be addressed later), who occupy the role of landowners in general, but also farm owners and upper management in the area; it is home to coloureds, who also form part of the strong middle class in this area, although the rest of this category is employed mainly as farm

⁷ The Population Registration Act was enacted in 1952 by the apartheid government (the National Party, which came to power in 1948) and involved the racial classification of every South African individual on the basis of four racial categories: White, Coloured, Bantu, and Asian (De Villiers, 1988:316).

workers; and black people, who reside exclusively in the informal settlements, acting as minimum-wage seasonal labourers. A racial breakdown according to population category would resemble that of the whole country: blacks being the majority, whites the minority, and the coloured population falling somewhere in the middle. An economic breakdown of income would also resemble wider statistics: whites being in the top income group and blacks in general forming the lowest income group.⁸ Measured in per capita income as determined in 2000, one finds that black people have the lowest income, coloured people have a slightly higher income (about twice as much as blacks), and white people have the highest income (about six to seven times more than the black population) (Van der Berg and Louw, 2003:11).⁹ On paper it would seem as if little has changed since the 1994 transition in my research area.

As far as the eye can see, fruit trees, vegetable plantations, corn fields and grazing lands cover the surface of this valley, stretching from the outskirts of town to the slopes of the mountains. With a strong white middle class and lucrative businesses centred around the agricultural industry, it becomes clear that local agriculture and related businesses form the financial backbone of my research area. During my observations I soon became aware of the fact that the farms in my research area are businesses and managed accordingly. This means that, in order for them to be part of the export community or distribute their fruit to large chain stores in South Africa, practices on these farms ‘need to subscribe to national legislation and international norms on labour standards’ (Möller, 2011).¹⁰

⁸ Statistics South Africa (2008:3) found for the period 2005/2006 that ‘[i]nequality continues to remain high between population groups and within individual population groups. The Gini coefficient based on disposable income (from work and social grants) for the whole country was 0,72. Within individual groups the Gini coefficient was highest at 0,63 among black African households’. A note on the Gini coefficient: ‘This is the most commonly used measure of inequality. The coefficient varies between 0, which reflects complete equality and 1, which indicates complete inequality (one person has all the income or consumption, all others have none)’ (World Bank, 2011).

⁹ Per capita income has increased slightly for all population groups since 1995, but the overall pattern remains the same (Van der Berg and Louw, 2003:11).

¹⁰ This observation was made on the basis of a recent report, entitled *Ripe with Abuse*, by Human Rights Watch in which it was claimed that farm workers in the Western Cape are ‘subject to exploitative conditions and human rights abuses’ – citing ‘physically grueling work’ performed for ‘among the lowest wages in South Africa’; ‘working long hours in harsh weather conditions’; and ‘often without access to toilets or drinking water’ as evidence of these abuses (HRW, 2011:4). As the living and working conditions of the workers were not investigated by me, I cannot confirm these allegations. However, if the findings by Human Rights Watch are accurate, it is another indication of the inequality between farmers and workers and the typical race/class differences that are found. However, this report has been harshly criticised for its

According to Du Toit (1993:315), '[t]he Western Cape ... has known capitalist relations for the longest time [and] the work on its farms has largely been done by a landless rural proletariat' – the landless proletariat consisting mainly of a coloured population, while the landowners are represented by white farmers. Similarly to the findings of studies conducted by Du Toit (1993) and Ewert and Hamman (1999) on wine farms in the Western Cape, I found that the permanent workers were mostly, if not all, coloured males. Women and black workers were only used as non-permanent labourers for seasonal work. Ewert and Du Toit (2005:328) concluded that the 'permanent labour force is almost exclusively Coloured and predominantly male', with workers either having 'grown up on the farm where they are employed or originate from the immediate vicinity of the workplace'. Africans comprise a very small part of the labour force on farms – employed mainly for seasonal work, if at all. Women form an important part of the casual and contract workers. This workforce is mainly comprised of 'female dependents of permanent (coloured) farm workers and women from the neighbouring farms and nearby towns', who work on an 'as-needed' basis (Du Toit and Ally, 2003:10; Ewert and Du Toit, 2005:328).

The farm owners and managers (who were to be found on larger farms) were mostly white,¹¹ their permanent workers were coloured people residing on the farm of employment, and their seasonal workers were both black and coloured and generally did not reside on the farm, although there were a few exceptions. Lower class coloured neighbourhoods as well as the informal settlements thus provide the pool of labour that is drawn upon when seasonal work starts on the farms. It is not uncommon to see pick-up trucks loaded with black or coloured workers on the back, and a white driver alone in the front cab, driving to and from pick-up points outside the informal settlements and lower class coloured neighbourhoods just after sunrise and just before sunset during the fruit-picking and pruning seasons.

weak research methodology and has been labelled as 'one-sided, malicious, unfair and highly irresponsible' by AGRI SA (Möller, 2011).

¹¹ Taking into account a few Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) projects that had been launched for the sake of government policy – thereby 'mostly' and not 'all.' Yet it could safely be argued that about 95% to 98% of the agricultural land is in the hands of white owners.

I found a relatively close relationship to exist between white farmers and their permanent coloured workers. Historically, the relationships between whites and coloureds were characterised as being much closer than that of whites and blacks. In the democratic South Africa, the National Party even managed to gather coloured support. In fact, ‘at the time of its demise ... the NP had a substantial coloured support base’ (Van der Westhuizen, 2007:44). Although the relationship between white farmers and their coloured workers was highly unequal, it was mostly civil. Nowhere did I see or hear of violent behaviour between these two groups. Yet they were kept separate. A farmer explained to me:

I grew up on a farm in a time when apartheid was probably at its peak. And I did not get the feeling that there was hate between the races. But we had our place, and they had theirs.

Although a bond exists, the racial categories are still viewed as separate by whites in my research area. I also found that the idea of a racial hierarchy existed within the minds of my research subjects, who often managed to couple good qualities to their coloured workers, yet still referred to them in a derogatory manner. For instance, ‘he’s a trustworthy h*tn*t’ (*hy’s ‘n betroubare h*tn*t*). Thus, relationships between whites and coloureds are based on a racial hierarchy rather than equal social standing. Despite this unique bond, racial boundaries still play an undeniable role in my research area. In general, boundaries ‘involve relations of exclusion and inclusion’ (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1994:7) and exert ‘an influence that restricts and restrains behavior’ (Postmes, Spears and Lea, 1998:690). Lan (2003:526) defines boundaries, or rather ‘boundary work’, as ‘the strategies, principles, and practices we use to create, maintain, and modify cultural categories’. The social boundaries in my research area, described by Postmes et al (1998:690) as those boundaries that are drawn around perceived social differences within communities (in my case drawn between racial categories), in many cases resembled the continuity of an apartheid past and ultimately became an informing part of my study.

Maré (2001:85) is of the opinion that ‘[t]he body, through its spatial location, confirms social processes and continuities with the past’. Through apartheid legislation, people were not only allocated to racial categories, but also separated spatially. This separation did not only mean that the different races were ‘living in their “own” areas but that many

other spatially related activities were shaped by such allocation' (Maré, 2001:85). From who can be found on which streets, to the utilisation of specific transportation and who shops where, 'the visual social landscape was racialised' (Maré, 2001:85). It did not take long for me to conclude that, within my research area, the visual social landscape was still racialised – another identified continuity of the apartheid state. The separation of the races was evident in all parts of society. The neighbourhoods were clearly demarcated according to race – the coloured neighbourhood on one side of the main street, the white neighbourhood on the other. Blacks resided mostly on the outskirts of town in informal settlements. The coloured and white neighbourhoods were also divided according to class (lower, middle and upper class sections within each racially identified neighbourhood). Blacks, however, were reduced to lower class only.

The racialised social landscape was certainly not reduced to living arrangements only. On the bustling Saturdays it became evident that the main street was racialised as well. The long street that ran right through town, stretching from one end to the other, was almost neatly divided into sections. In the space around the local Shoprite, KFC and Chinese shops, situated in the middle of the town, one found an almost exclusively coloured population. The Pick n Pay and its surrounding stores, situated about a kilometre further up the main street, played host to a much whiter population, with elements of the coloured middle class in the mix. But once you found yourself at Spar, situated on the other side of town, you mainly found yourself in white company, this is, if you excluded the store clerks and the cleaners. While the town was home to a relatively large black population, they were rarely noticed on the streets. It seemed to me as if they kept to themselves in the informal settlements on the outskirts of town. A visual racial landscape was an undeniable part of my research area – yes, there were the exceptions, but the overall trend was visible to the naked eye. To the observer, the racially demarcated areas of white, coloured and black became all too evident, the main street of Farmville becoming the formal location for racial intermingling, yet this was not quite the case. Upon observation, the racial divide, in terms of space and socialising, was simply undeniable.

1.2 Research question and aims

My research question was guided by my initial observations. What I had witnessed was a continuity of apartheid conceptions of racial categories and a subsequent fixed racial hierarchy deriving from the very same era. It was not my aim to look for extreme forms of racism within my research area.¹² Throughout my research I remained open to the possibility of encountering behaviour of this sort, but I did not find any. The focus of my research was rather the everyday relationships shaped by the everyday habitus. In other words, my focus was on the taken-for-granted knowledge regarding the racial other transmitted from one generation to the next. My research was guided by a question posed by Distiller and Steyn (2004:2): ‘What, exactly, is “new” about the “new nation”? ... What is being replicated in the present and what is being reworked?’

My investigation was thus aimed at identifying possible continuities and change within the relationships between the different racial categories (white, black, and coloured) in my research area. Did these relationships still resemble remnants of an apartheid past? What kind of continuities could be witnessed regarding these relationships and how, if at all, had these relationships changed in a post-apartheid South Africa? Based on their historical position of dominance in South Africa, and of course their inescapable link to the apartheid system, it was the Afrikaners of this area who were chosen as my main research subjects. If any change had happened regarding race relations¹³ since the transition, it would be visible in this category, and from their point of view. For it is as Jansen (2009:60) argues, ‘[k]nowledge does not transmit as neutral, fact-based information from one generation to the next; it is embedded within dominant belief systems’.

1.2.1 Afrikaners as a subject for research

While my research subjects are generally classified as Afrikaners, it should be noted that there are some issues to address before using such an encompassing term. Both Davies (2004:28) and Serfontein (as cited in Zegeye, 2001:12), are of the opinion that a singular,

¹² On the basis of newspaper articles and online blogs I was aware that extremism could be found in this area but this was not the focus of my study and, as I found during my research, such extremism was also not representative of the general attitudes of white people in the area.

¹³ Race relations are simply used to ‘imply interaction between races’ (Ogburn, 1961:200).

identifiable Afrikaner group or nation no longer exists, and that what we rather are witnessing is an ‘emerging plurality of subjective meanings of “Afrikanerness”’. Historically, the Afrikaner was defined ‘vis-à-vis the English-speakers and the coloureds’ (Goodwin, 1995:46). In other words, they were defined vis-à-vis the ‘other’ regarding two key characteristics: language and skin colour. These are the criteria that both Davies (2004:150) – who defines Afrikaners as ‘whites who have Afrikaans as their mother tongue’, and Van der Westhuizen (2007:286) – who defines them as ‘Afrikaans-speaking whites’, use in their studies. The truth is that, although they often are viewed as a homogeneous group, the Afrikaners are indeed fragmented. To avoid essentialism I will not be engaging in a detailed description of who the Afrikaner supposedly is, for it is as Davies (2004:24) argues, namely that the constructions of Afrikaners are becoming increasingly plural. What can be said is that my respondents were all white, had Afrikaans as their mother tongue and happened to belong to the local Dutch Reformed Church. Many of them were farmers in the area, either owning the farm or working and living on the farm in a managerial capacity. In no way am I implying that this is a homogeneous description of Afrikaners, yet it is representative of at least one of the pluralities known as Afrikaners. In this sense it should be admitted that this study will only cover certain fragments of what is considered to be a whole population.

The white Afrikaners of this area were the specific focus of my study, thus all my findings are limited to the position of the whites in this area. Due to time and space constraints it was not possible to sufficiently study or incorporate the views of the workers (the racial other). This could be identified as a limitation of the current study. To study the different groups together, to allow for equal representation, would comprise a different study altogether. While my initial aim was to look at relationships between whites and the racial other, the focus of the study quickly turned to the relationship between whites and coloureds. Due to the roles that these two groups fulfil in my area of study, whites being the employers and coloureds the employees (both on the farm and in the homes), interaction between these two groups was more evident and part of the everyday. Blacks, on the other hand, are used mainly as seasonal labourers on the farms and, other than this, played a marginal role in the broader community. From the point of view of my research subjects I was also able to identify that a clear hierarchy, ranging

from civilised to barbaric, was attributed to the racial groups – whites at the top; coloureds in the middle; and blacks at the bottom, because, as one of my respondents remarked, they were simply ‘closer to animals’. Thus it should be noted that a study of whites and blacks in this area might reveal completely different tendencies from the focus of my study, which is a study of the relationship between white and coloured people from the point of view of white Afrikaners.

1.2.2 Studying race: Concepts and complexities

By now it has become quite clear that racial categories play an undeniable role in my research. Throughout this thesis, race will be treated as a social category. Sharp (1988:13) defines a social category as ‘a set of people who have one or more characteristic in common’. Categories are mere classifications of individuals on the basis of some shared characteristic (male, female, blonde, left-handed, etc.) and are by no means an indication that these individuals share any other characteristics. Therefore, ‘categories are fundamentally arbitrary’ (Sharp, 1988:13).¹⁴ It becomes clear that social categories, and the process of categorisation itself, become a breeding ground for prejudice and stereotyping (Tajfel, 1981:131).

The concept of race will be central to my investigation. Thus, it would be impossible, if not inadequate, not to address race as a concept. This section will briefly address the main arguments within the race domain – highlighting the complexities and clarifying my own approach to this contested concept. While many scientists and academics argue that no scientific basis exists for the notion of race, many also object to this line of argument. Exactly how to define race or which characteristics to employ in its definition is still highly contested. In the scientific community there are varied approaches to the concept of race. In order to align my own study within a specific approach and to place the reader within this framework, it becomes important to outline these varied approaches to the

¹⁴ This differs from a social group, which can be defined as an entity that has ‘enduring and morally established forms of social interaction, self-definition as a member (they should define themselves as members of a particular social group), and the same definition by others’ (they should be defined by others as members of that particular social group) (Sharp, 1988:14). For Tajfel (1978:425) it is specifically important that the ‘individuals concerned are consensually referred to by a common label, both by other people and by themselves’. But there is also something more substantial to social groups. Fraser (1978:213) is of the opinion that a social group shares a history and has certain norms and procedures in place – something that Sharp (1988:14) describes as ‘interact[ing] in established ways to achieve certain ends’.

concept of race (as illustrated in Figure 1 below). The superficial theory, also referred to as a typological view of race, holds that race is a readily visible biological trait. Visible traits in this sense include skin colour, the shape and size of the nose, etc. Thus, phenotypic traits visible to the naked eye seemingly point to the fact that race is a biological category (Glasgow, 2009:84). The genetic racial realism view asserts that those superficial, phenotypic traits ‘are tied to genetic markers that we can use to sort people into ancestral traits’ (Glasgow, 2009:84). Populationism asserts that ‘races are breeding populations’ (Glasgow, 2009:84). In other words, certain populations of people tend to reproduce at a higher rate with members of their own population than with those external to their population, causing ‘reproductive isolation’ which, over time, results in a certain ‘degree of genetic distance’ between these breeding populations (races) (Glasgow, 2009:84). Constructivism maintains that, although race may not be a biological category, it is socially very real, as the concept of race is socially constructed. In other words, ‘racial groups are real groups that have been created by our social practices, rather than by some biological process’ (Glasgow, 2009:5).

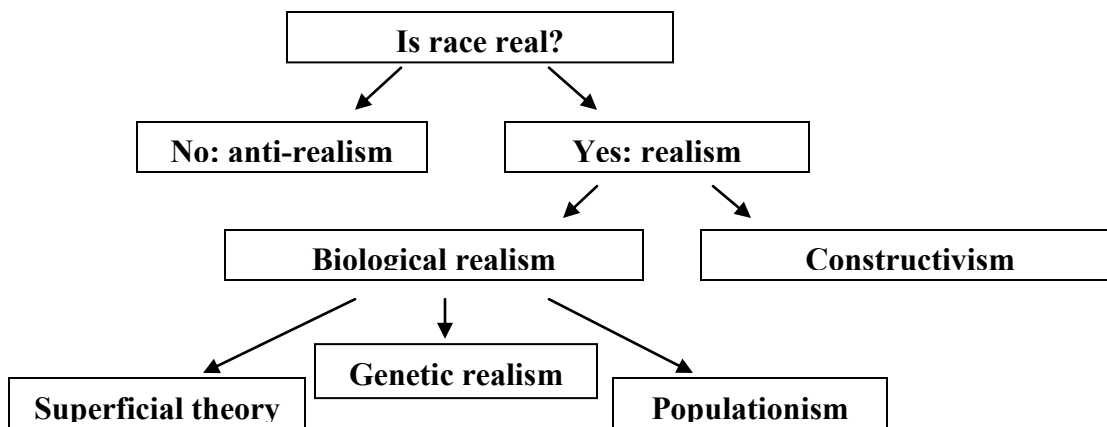


Figure 1: The racial landscape (Glasgow, 2009:5)

My own approach falls within the constructivist framework. Race will thus be approached as a social construct that is ‘important because people believe it to be important’ (Patterson, 2002:345). Todorov (2009 [2000]:69) is of the opinion that, while

scientists do not believe in the notion of race, the man on the street is convinced of its existence – coinciding with the opinion of Kant, who argued that race itself is possibly ‘nowhere to be found in nature’, yet ‘the concept which this expression designates is nevertheless well-established in the reason of every observer of nature’ (Bernasconi, 2001:29). Thus we arrive at the paradox of race which, according to Puttergill (2008:59), ‘lies between the fictitiousness of race and its enduring consequences’. In other words, while denying the existence of this phenomenon, it is still employed to implement policies and explain certain social phenomena in society and science.

The paradox of race is also undeniable in post-apartheid South Africa. In an attempt to benefit the previously disadvantaged, ‘explicit definitions of the segmented South African population are reappearing’ (James and Lever, 2001:33). While a de-racialised South Africa was widely promoted after the transition, the country seems to have been re-racialised by government policies such as Affirmative Action, Black Economic Empowerment, and Land Distribution (Moodley and Adam, 2000:4). South Africans are also generally required to ‘specify “race”, “ethnic group” and “population group” on forms’ for job applications, or applications for passports and identity documents (Maré, 2001:82). Indeed, ‘the everyday banality of race classification permeates South Africa on an amazingly regular basis’ (Maré, 2001:82). With this current drive to right the wrongs of the past, ‘it seems likely that such racial naming will remain prominent in a society constitutionally committed to non-racialism’ (James and Lever, 2001:33). In the South African context it would be extremely difficult to argue against the importance of the concept of race. In the South African case one has to agree with Bernasconi (2001:18), who argued that ‘given this nation’s history of race relations, we are unable to do away with the notion of race’. In my own approach to this study I have to agree with Donald and Rattansi (1992:1), who are of the opinion that the question is no longer whether race exists, but rather ‘how the category operates in practice’.

1.3 Research design

The research questions that were investigated were of an exploratory nature. They involved addressing issues such as race, identity, social boundaries, and socialisation. Quantitative methods have been criticised for not truly being able to access meaning, or

to delve deeply into the issues that need explaining. Quantitative research often treats social phenomena ‘as more clearly defined and distinct than they are’ (Hammersley, 1992:12). Therefore, a choice was made to conduct an empirical, qualitative study using an ethnographic approach. According to Brewer, as cited in Bryman (2001:ix-x),

ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or “fields” by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner without meaning being imposed on them externally.

In other words, it involves an immersion in the study area. Of course, such an approach immediately renders the levels of control to be very low – specifically in terms of the research environment and, ultimately, the findings (Mouton, 2008 [2001]:148). Although low levels of control are often considered a disadvantage to any study conducted, I found that such an environment often illuminated interesting avenues for research and left me open to interesting and unanticipated findings.

For Dewalt and Dewalt (1998:264), an advantage of the ethnographic approach is that ‘it enhances the quality of the data obtained ... [and] the interpretation of data’. This approach allows the introduction of broad themes instead of a very structured and narrow focus. It is my personal opinion that a structured approach with a narrow focus would have been a major disadvantage to this particular study. The ethnographic approach allowed for a flexible study and a deeper understanding of my research subjects and the issues addressed – it allowed for a closer look at how Afrikaners function within the context of past meeting present, and what type of relationships they had with the racial other. The ethnographic approach offered not only recollection, but ‘reflection on, an examination of, and an argument about experience made from a particular standpoint’ (Blasco and Wardle, 2007:9).

1.3.1 Methodology

In order to draw conclusions based on my research area and my research participants it became evident that adequate time spent in the field would be a very important element of my research and my research product. Emerson (cited in Bryman, 2001:xvii) is of the

opinion that ‘too often: ethnographers do not spend sufficient time in the field’, resulting in weak conceptualisations and weakly defined theoretical issues, and a ‘failure to grasp fully the categories and meanings of those who are the focus of an investigation’. The total time of three months that I spent in the field formed the foundation of all my findings and arguments. Using an ethnographic approach, participant observation and interviews were employed as the primary methods of data gathering. During this time, all observations and conversations (which consisted of semi-structured, in-depth interviews as well as casual conversation or, as Schutte (1995:8) refers to it, ‘the ethnography of everyday talking’) were documented through written notes and voice recordings.

Participant observation involves taking part in ‘the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of the people being studied’ (Dewalt and Dewalt, 1998:260). It is a way to ‘collect data in a relatively unstructured manner in naturalistic settings’ (Dewalt and Dewalt, 1998:260). Observations were made in a variety of natural settings within the research area – on selected farms, on the streets, in homes, at church sermons, anywhere that would possibly shed light on the existence or non-existence of relationships between the different racial categories. During this time I engaged in moderate¹⁵ to active¹⁶ participation. Extensive field notes were used to document this stage of the fieldwork.¹⁷ Such observations provided not only very relevant, but also very significant, information regarding my research area and my subjects. I found, similar to Dewalt and Dewalt (1998:264), that participant observation ‘enhance[d] the quality of data obtained ... and the quality of the interpretation of the data’.

¹⁵ Moderate participation ‘is when the ethnographer is present at the scene of action but doesn’t actively participate or interact, or only occasionally interacts, with the people in it’ (Dewalt and Dewalt, 1998:262).

¹⁶ Active participation ‘is when the ethnographer actually engages in almost everything that other people are doing’ (Dewalt and Dewalt, 1998:262).

¹⁷ At first I was adamant to always have my notebook ready and to jot down my notes immediately – following the advice of Dewalt and Dewalt (1998:271), who argue: ‘[i]t is unwise to trust to memory, notes should be written as soon as possible.’ However, I soon found my note taking to be in the way of the action of participant observation – both impacting the flow of my observations and arousing suspicion on the part of my research subjects, who seemed all the more aware of the fact that they were being watched (observer-effect) and that their actions were being closely followed (Dewalt and Dewalt, 1998:272). Thus, I started to rely on what Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2001:356) refer to as mental notes – simply attempting to remember all the details and writing them down as soon as I was alone in an attempt to ‘avoid any and all writing in the presence of those studied’ (Emerson et al, 2001:357).

After an initial stage of observation, participants were selected for informal interviews. At this stage an important choice had to be made regarding the selection of possible respondents. According to Bryman (2001:xix), the aim is ‘to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study’ – something he refers to as purposeful sampling. Thus, as was the case for Puttergill (2008:173), my selection of respondents was ‘guided by the focus of investigation’. The ideal was to establish ‘respectful, on-going relationships with interviewees’ in order to have ‘a genuine exchange of views’ as far as possible (Sherman Heyl, 2001:369). Due to the size of the project, coupled with time constraints and the difficulty often associated with scheduling interviews, a total of fifteen respondents were selected according to their age, their origin (specifically having spent most of their lives in this area – having grown up there or having been part of the community since young adulthood, specifically in cases where the respondents were over the age of 45), and their occupation (owning and/or working on farms or related industries). The respondents included both men and women falling within the age brackets of 25 and 65. This allowed for the illumination of attitude transmission or the existence of possible generation gaps regarding the issue at hand, namely inter-racial social interaction and racism in the community. But in this regard I have to identify another limitation of this study, namely the absence of children. Due to time and space constraints, not to mention the ethical implications of observing and interviewing children, it was decided to focus on the adult population of my research area. A further study with a focus on changes and tendencies among the youth may here be identified as an avenue for future research.

At this point it becomes necessary to turn the attention to the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the 15 willing participants.¹⁸ For Bryman (2001:xix) ‘there is no gold standard for making decisions about sample size’. It is rather ‘the aims of the study [that] determine the sample size and this cannot be known in advance’ (Bryman, 2001:xix). I am aware that 15 interviews may seem to be a somewhat low number to be representative of a whole community; however, during the course of my fieldwork and

¹⁸ Although a relatively small number, it should be noted that 15 respondents do fall within the suggested norm. A number of scholars ‘suggest between fifteen and twenty-five in-depth interviews as the norm, with upper and lower limits between five and fifty’ (Puttergill, 2008:173).

casual conversations with many of my subjects I found the interviews to contain the essence of the attitudes of the majority of white residents in the community. These casual conversations proved to be most informing, but at all times it had to be borne in mind that, although ‘everyday unsolicited talk in many respects would be the ideal’, it remains questionable whether unproblematic access to such talk is possible (Puttergill, 2008:169). According to Puttergill (2008:169) ‘[n]aturally occurring conversations are not necessarily less “staged” and therefore more authentic than an interview’.

Ethnography predominantly uses informal, semi-structured interviewing (Bryman, 2001:xxiii). Thus, all interviews were open ended, encouraging participants to speak freely and, in the process, allowing for new issues to be illuminated by the respondents themselves. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995 [1983]:143), ‘within the boundaries of the interview context the aim is to facilitate a conversation, giving the interviewee a good deal more leeway to talk on their own terms’. It was with this approach in mind that I conducted my informal, semi-structured interviews – a flexible approach, ‘allowing the discussion to flow in a way that seems natural’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995 [1983]:153). The interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, as this was the home language of all my respondents, and translated into English for the purposes of this thesis. It was found that such translations presented a host of challenges. I found that some Afrikaans words or phrases just would not translate as accurately into English as one would ideally wish for (especially derogatory terms used for the racial other), or the meaning of certain Afrikaans words would literally just get lost in translation. For these reasons it was decided to keep some of the Afrikaans words or phrases as they were originally collected during the interviews and conversations, and rather give a description instead of a direct translation of these phrases in parentheses. Care was thus taken to ensure that these interviews and conversations were translated and presented as accurately as possible.

In the same vein as the problems encountered with translation, it could be argued that, between the field and the report, and from practice to paper, something gets lost. The experience becomes a slightly watered-down version of what it once was. Puttergill (2008:172) arrives at the same conclusion and argues that

[r]etelling experience is not the experience itself and cannot escape interpretation.

There is always a gap between the experience and relating it. Accounts are not merely a simple and complete reproduction of matters.

I am completely aware of this, what could be called a shortcoming of the ethnographic approach, or of any qualitative study for that matter. However, even though some of the experience gets lost between the field and the final written report, enough of it remains to sufficiently inform the reader of the encounters in the field. I can only hope that my own work proves testament to this statement.

1.4 Ethical considerations

According to Madison (2005:80), 'being attentive to ethics is a challenge and compelling undertaking'. Due to the sensitivity of the topic at hand there are quite a few ethical considerations that had to be taken into account before, during, and after conducting the fieldwork. First and foremost, the issue of familiarity, as identified by Gokah (2006:63-64), had to be borne in mind throughout my research. Having grown up in the region and returning to conduct research, I realised that I may claim to know what I was about to find in the field and ignore all other possibilities in the process. This preconception would also relate to researcher distortion, where facts are deliberately distorted to fit existing preconceptions (Mouton, 2008 [2001]:106). This necessitated some self-reflexivity and self-criticism in order to 'not take [my] own perspective for granted, to question [my]self and to think honestly about the attitude and disposition [I] hold for the subjects of [my] study' (Madison, 2005:124). Care was thus taken to be as objective as possible in gathering my data and to avoid selectivity in the process. Thus, throughout my research I strived for fairness. According to Madison (2005:122), fairness entails objectivity and balance and, although he claims that each is problematic, as the researcher brings his or her own subjectivity, biases, and partiality to the field, it is still possible to strive to attain this ideal.

The code of ethics of the American Anthropology Association states that researchers 'are not only responsible for the factual content of their statements but also must consider carefully the social and political implications of the information they disseminate' (Madison, 2005:109). Researching inter-racial social interactions in a farmers'

community with a specific focus on Afrikaans-speaking whites in a post-apartheid context could become a somewhat explosive issue. Entering the field, I was fully aware of the sensitivity of the theme to be explored, and my situation seemed to resonate with Gunaratnam's (2003:159) concept of 'topic threat'. According to Gunaratnam (2003:159),

the threat of particular topics has been seen as leading to defensive emotional responses in the research participant ... that can have negative consequences upon the quality of the research accounts that are generated.

Topic threat poses a clear and present danger for having 'distinct and significant methodological and ethical implications' (Gunaratnam, 2003:159). It is thus important to discuss the ethical considerations for a study involving qualitative research methods that explores a very sensitive issue and, may I add, within a very sensitive context, namely that of white Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa.

As a result, social desirability effects may have come into play due to the sensitive nature of the topic. My respondents may have hidden their true feelings toward members of the racial other in order not to give the impression of being intolerant or uneasy with such relations. A problem that may easily stem from this is interpretive bias, where the researcher tries to 'read between the lines' in order to access the subjects' 'true' feelings and ends up selecting only the evidence that will confirm initial suspicions. This problem has also been identified by Madison (2005:125), who argues that some researchers enter the field 'for the single purpose of getting good material to further their own self-interest and ambitions'. The specified ethical considerations have been borne in mind and special care was taken to guard against such unethical practice.

It is important to take into account that my primary responsibility was to those who were being studied (Madison, 2005:111). According to Madison (2005:111), researchers 'must make every effort to ensure that their work does not *harm the safety, dignity, or privacy* of those with whom they work'. It was thus my responsibility to protect the research participants at all times. A conscious decision needed to be made on what to report and what to withhold. Here it was important to carefully consider ethical implications and the impact of the reported information on the research participants and the area of study

(Dewalt and Dewalt, 1998:273). In this regard, the importance of anonymity cannot be overstated. Therefore, I have attempted to ensure the confidentiality of all the participants and the research area through the use of pseudonyms.

Another issue that needs to be addressed regarding ethnographic fieldwork is that of replication and re-study. It has often been encountered in the anthropological field that studies of similar areas by different researchers result in conflicting findings (Bryman, 2001:xxx). For Hunter (cited in Bryman, 2001:xxx), a genuine replication of an anthropological study is almost impossible, 'not just because social settings cannot remain frozen in time, but also because new theoretical and methodological traditions emerge over time'. For Burawoy (1998:11) it is quite simple: '[h]istory is not a laboratory experiment that can be replicated again and again under the same conditions'. Another important element is that the anthropologist is an individual with specific characteristics and personality traits, which will influence everything from access to the research subjects, the accessibility of the anthropologist, interpretations of any situation encountered in the field and, finally, the results rendered. Thus, the anthropologist brings something very unique to the field, something that would be impossible to replicate, and that is his/her own personality. As Burawoy (1998:11) argued about his own research at Zambian copper mines, '[t]he data I gathered was very much contingent on who I was'. It is for this reason that I tend to agree with Heider, as cited in Bryman (2001:xxx), that 'we should try to get away from the simplistic view that one is right and the other wrong when ethnographers disagree'. Thus, we have to conclude that '[t]here is something ineffably unique about the ethnographic encounter' (Burawoy, 1998:11).

1.4.1 Personal reflections

At the end of it all, I am fully aware that 'all ethnographies are written by individuals with particular interests and obsessions, likes and dislikes, backgrounds, and personal and intellectual trajectories' (Blasco and Wardle, 2007:118). In a similar vein, Fuchs (2001:33) argues: '[t]o an observer, the ideological modes of his observing are invisible; they are the frames, paradigms, and perspectives ... they are the observer's common sense, his background certainties and obvious truths'. Even though I am the researcher in this situation, I am still human and am certainly not exempted from such frailty. Of

course, with this knowledge in mind, one cannot help but question the issue of objectivity. Noble (2000:13) also addresses the problematic of objectivity by arguing that the meaning that so-called facts have for us 'is coloured by the emotional, moral or political commitments which make the framework of our understanding'. As an individual, part of a larger society, '[i]t is not possible to step back from society for an objective view [for] [h]ow can we be dispassionate about what we are so intimately involved with?' (Noble, 2000:13).

During my research I often found myself in disagreement with the general norms and beliefs of my research subjects, and this caused feelings of alienation and removal. I am inclined to admit that, finding myself in this situation, I have to question my own objectivity, for 'how an observer observes depends on how that observer relates to what is being observed' (Fuchs, 2001:6). Yes, I have to admit, I do not share the views of most of my respondents. But then again, I also have to admit that it could just as easily have been my view as well. As Fuchs (2001:4) argues, 'the person you are differs according to the social and cultural relations around you'. The only thing that sets me apart from my research subjects is circumstance, for we are only the products of our circumstances and our surroundings.

Thus, I can only hope that I succeeded in becoming 'one of the rare people who can separate [my] observation from [my] preconception [to] see what is, where most people see what they expect' (Steinbeck, 1963:156). Yet I have to arrive at the conclusion that complete objectivity is but an unreachable goal, although an attempt needs to be made to reach for that goal as far as the mind will allow it. This, then, is simply my own account and interpretation of my fieldwork.

1.5 Chapter outline

Race, both as a concept and as a social category, seems to form the very foundation of my research. While this concept has been briefly addressed above, it is by no means an adequate investigation and explanation of the complexities of this concept and the difficulties involved in studying it. To lay the foundation for my research it was important to address the history of race thinking from its inception to its current position

in society. According to Rex (2009 [2000]:177), studying race ‘starts with the task of unmasking false biological or related theories’. In Chapter 2 I will start by tracing the historical development of race as a social category. In this chapter we will follow the concept’s rise and demise from the 17th century onwards, to finally arrive at the 21st century, where it is now believed by the wider scientific community, and specifically in the field of anthropology, that race proves to be nothing more than a social myth – created for purposes of power and domination. This chapter will attempt to illustrate how race and racial categories should be understood ‘as the product of a complex intersection of various institutional, organizational and other conditions and procedures’ (Wolpe, 1986:128).

The theme of Chapter 3 will build on that of the second chapter. In this chapter the racial history of South Africa will be examined and discussed with a specific focus on Afrikaners – a category that resonates closely with my research subjects. It will be illustrated how racial categories have been a part of South African society since the arrival of the first Dutch settlers. Over centuries, the social salience of racial categories in South Africa was elevated to the point where racial segregation finally became a legal policy – guiding all social interaction by the country’s citizens. While the people of South Africa were finally placed on an equal footing by the 1994 democratic elections and brought together under a power-sharing government, it was found that Afrikaners did not have a ‘road to Damascus experience’ following this election. Instead, ‘the many decades of apartheid had seriously impaired the ability to cross racial barriers’ (Schutte, 1995:330). Racial categories have remained a very salient social category in post-apartheid South Africa. And, as I found, they have remained one of the main guiding forces of social contact in my research area.

Above it was argued that apartheid had impaired the abilities of South Africans to cross racial boundaries. As has been mentioned before, principles and practices are employed to ‘create, maintain, and modify’ social categories (Lan, 2003:526), and boundaries are employed to exert ‘an influence that restricts and restrains behavior’ (Postmes et al, 1998:690). In Chapter 4 I will examine the social boundaries and ‘boundary work’ in my research area – boundaries that were exclusively constructed according to racial

categories. It will be illustrated how some boundaries remain fixed to become non-negotiable and immovable – boundaries that signify continuity from the apartheid South Africa of old to the ‘new’, post-apartheid South Africa. But it will also be illustrated how attempts have been made to cross some social boundaries – specifically through using the example of a community project in my research area (Project Paint). With a focus on my research subjects and by employing Douglas’s (1966) concept of ‘in-place’ and ‘out-of-place’, I hope to illustrate how boundaries associated with apartheid rule, boundaries used to create distance between whites and the racial other, have remained fixed in my research area in a post-apartheid context.

It is true for almost all societies that ‘each new generation is taught appropriate beliefs regarding other groups’ (Yinger, 1986:32). Jansen (2008:62) supports this view, as he argues that messages concerning a distinct racial formation have remained uninterrupted in all-white circles even after the transition. While it will be shown in Chapter 4 that social boundaries based on racial categories have survived the 1994 transition, Chapter 5 will be an investigation of why this is the case – how have beliefs of segregation survived almost two decades into the transition? Chapter 5 will thus be concerned with the transmission of beliefs and attitudes in my research area – with a specific focus on my research subjects, of course. In this chapter it will be illustrated how ‘it is yesterday’s man who inevitably predominates in us’ (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:79). As humans we are formed by the past and, consequently, we are the results of that past. Through the use of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, the continuities of apartheid rule to be found in post-apartheid South Africa will be explained. Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:72) explains that the habitus is produced by social structures and there is always a tendency to reproduce these objective structures through the habitus, which in turn is informed by past conditions. It will be argued that the habitus provides the norms, values and beliefs of the generation, and that it structures and regulates practices not in a way that it is not a product of obedience to rules, but rather as presenting the only rational option. In other words, it is an unconscious regulation of behaviour and practices.

Chapter 6 will provide a general conclusion in relation to my findings, and will specifically analyse the relationship between whites and coloureds – a relationship that

has previously been described through paternalism. This chapter will investigate whether such an explanation can be applied to my own research area – attempting to highlight similarities and differences. This is, in essence, a study of racial categories in post-apartheid South Africa and an investigation of how inter-racial relationships are shaped by the continuities emanating from apartheid South Africa in a present-day rural farmers' community.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF RACE AND RACIAL CATEGORIES

2.1 Introduction

According to Hill (2008:12), we have become obsessive about racial labels because, in essence, racial categories have influenced how we think about other people. The concept of race has become so embedded in society that it has become almost natural for racial labels to shape our fundamental perceptions (Hill, 2008:12). Although race is presently one of the most salient dimensions of a person's social identity, this was not always the case. For centuries the concept had no significant meaning, but since the sixteenth century the concept of race, and the beliefs that accompanied it, have been in constant development. Indeed, the concept of race has developed to such an extent that it informs our everyday behaviour and beliefs. It has developed to the extent that one hardly can imagine a world without race. Yet, the scientific community is generally in agreement that race as a biological category is nothing more than a myth. In this chapter it is the development of the concept of race, one that we will find is of a highly paradoxical nature, that will be addressed.

In this chapter it will be illustrated how the development of the concept of race was informed by racist ideas and practices. It will be argued that the racial beliefs of the 18th and 19th century were based on racial essentialism.¹⁹ The main assumption concerning

¹⁹ According to Fuchs (2001:3), essentialism 'holds that things are what they are because that is their nature, essence, or definition'. Essentialism is that which is accepted as common sense or 'what phenomenology calls the natural attitude' (Fuchs, 2001:12). It is narrowing anything down to having an essence and 'being true and constant in all possible worlds' (Fuchs, 2001:12). Daynes and Lee (2008:100) define essentialism as 'a standpoint that holds that people can be categorized into separate groups whose intrinsic differences mark off the boundaries between groups'. It is a standpoint from which 'relationships are mapped onto the world and reified as that which remains true in all possible worlds' (Fuchs, 2001:33-34).

Racial essentialists posit that race will always be a politically salient category, as it is 'the most important element of identity' (Alcoff, 2001:270). It is argued that race informs identity, as members of a certain

race in this chapter, and also well beyond this chapter, is very well summarised by Alcoff (2001:270):

[o]ne can hold without contradiction that racialized identities are produced, sustained, and sometimes transformed through social beliefs and practices and yet that race is real, as real as anything else in lived experience, with operative effects in the social world.

This resonates closely with a theory developed by Daynes and Lee (2008:214), who argue that ‘the reality of race is not determined by an original moment of culture contact, experience, or practice, but rather by the peculiar force of the belief in the idea of race’. Yet this idea has been made real ‘in multiple sites and ways’ (Daynes and Lee, 2008:214). From colonialism and slavery, to 19th century racial sciences, to genocide, apartheid, and xenophobia, not to mention the very visible correlation between race and class²⁰ in many countries, all ‘contributed to the *sense of reality* of the idea of race’ (Daynes and Lee, 2008:215). According to Daynes and Lee (2008:224), ‘what must be analyzed is not the truth of race, but the belief in racial ideas: how it operates and how it is reproduced’. Although race will be viewed as nothing more than a social belief throughout this chapter and thesis, the reality of it as a social construct will never be denied; in fact, it will be endorsed.

2.2 The historical development of the concept of race

Although race was an identified social category before the 17th century, it was never a salient category. Before the 17th century, race was hardly something that would be used as justification for discrimination.²¹ Garner (2007:64) is of the opinion that the use of the

racial group share ‘a set of characteristics, a set of political interests, and a historical destiny’ (Alcoff, 2001:270). Thus, racial essentialists view racial identities as being stable throughout history. Racial groups are simply viewed as homogeneous and obvious. But such a position on race fails to acknowledge ‘the fluidity and open-endedness of racial meanings’ (Alcoff, 2001:270). It fails to avoid ‘rigid classifications’, to reject the notion of either/or and account for distinction or variation in degree (Fuchs, 2001:6, 13, 15).

²⁰ The concepts of race and class (treated here as a measure of economic status and income (see Marshall, 1998:98)) have become inextricably linked in modern-day society. While most of the world has been democratised and liberalised to allow for equal opportunity, we find that the structures of society simply do not yet allow for a clear separation of race and class. Critical Race Theory (CRT) has made this one of their focal points for explaining the persistent relevance of race in society – a theme that will be addressed towards the end of this chapter.

²¹ According to Montagu, as cited in Nirenberg (2009:233), the persecution of Jews ‘was always done on social, cultural, or religious grounds ... [W]hatever was held against them was never attributed to clearly defined biological reasons. The “racial” interpretation is a modern “discovery”’.

colour of one's skin as a classificatory tool dates back to the sixteenth century. But at that time it was only one type of label in a range of possible labels (Garner, 2007:64). By no means was it as determinant as it later came to be. Garner (2007:64) argues that, up until that time, religious labels were dominant, but new distinctions were sought once slaves began to convert to Christianity. Skin colour proved to be the obvious choice. It was also in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that Europeans were beginning to encounter people from other continents and 'notice the obvious if cosmetic difference between groups' (Garner, 2007:65).

In order to trace the development of the concept of race, it is important to return to a time before race became a salient concept or social category. Smedley (1998:691) uses historical records to illustrate the occurrence of interaction between peoples who would be considered, in current terminology, to have come from different racial backgrounds. He cites a number of examples, including Alexander the Great, who encouraged his warriors to intermarry with conquered peoples all the way to the Indus Valley in India. Another example is the Moroccan king whose soldiers remained in Western Sudan after they brought down the Songhai Empire in 1591. Here, as in the case of Alexander's armies, intermarriage occurred between the warriors and the local black people. The Bible also provides examples of intermarriage. For instance, Moses was married to an Ethiopian woman (Smedley, 1998:692). These are but a few examples to illustrate the unimportance, and non-existence, of the race concept before the seventeenth century.

In the societies where interaction, and even intermarriage, seem to have occurred so freely, there were other measures deemed important to determine one's identity and how one was viewed by society. One of these was kinship, or genealogical identity. A person was identified by who their mother or father was. This was especially important at tribal and chiefdom levels (Smedley, 1998:691). According to Smedley (1998:691), occupation was another 'important diagnostic of identity'. Whether one was a herdsman, a philosopher, a senator or a warrior was important in the eyes of the people of ancient societies. Thus, in ancient societies, occupation and kinship, rather than racial or ethnic identity, were determinants of how one was viewed and treated (Smedley, 1998:261).

One can deduct from the discussion above that race was a fairly absent category in the classification system of ancient societies. Montagu (1965:9,10) argues that, although ‘the word “race” was already in use in the sixteenth century in the sense of a group or population having certain physical traits ... nothing resembling the modern idea of “race” existed as either a social, a political, or as a scientific viewpoint’. Indeed, race had no significant social meaning. But this was to change, and quite drastically so. According to Smedley (1998:693), the introduction of race into society ‘brought about a subtle and powerful transformation in the world’s perceptions of human differences’. Smedley (1998:694) indicates that the introduction of the category of race initially appeared in the American colonies in the late eighteenth century. It was in this century that race finally gained precedence over other modes of classification.

2.2.1 The 18th century

It was during the Enlightenment that racist ideas were given a firm foothold in society. Under growing pressure from abolitionists, new reasoning was sought to defend the institution of slavery. Race was suddenly transformed into a biological concept, in terms of which it was argued that the ‘Negro was naturally, biologically, inferior to the white man’ (Montagu, 1965:39). The category of race was to be successfully transformed into a very salient social category under the auspices of burgeoning imperialism (Montagu, 1965:39). This was mainly because, once the religious justification for slavery started to wear thin, the biological justification was there to take its place.

According to Cravens (2010:300) it was ‘during the Enlightenment and the democratic revolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries’ that racial essentialism came to be – that people’s primary identities became associated with the colour of their skin. According to Montagu (1965:10-11), the belief in black inferiority stemmed from ‘reasoning that their illiteracy and degraded condition was due to their inborn inadequacies’. The late 18th century saw attempts at the ordering of humanity by many influential academics of the time – Hume, Kant, Blumenbach, and Campher being the most prominent. According to Bindman (2002:153), ‘[t]heir work of classification made possible theories of human categories based on deductions drawn from carefully considered evidence, at least by the standards of the time’.

In 1758, Carl Linnaeus became the first scientist to apply the concept of race to ‘subdivisions of the human population’ (Boonzaier, 1988:61). However, his classifications were not based entirely on physical characteristics; instead, he also focused on behavioural and personality traits. But even then, his conclusions alluded to the superiority of whites, describing the typical traits of Europeans as ‘light, lively and inventive’, while Africans were described as being ‘cunning, slow and negligent’ (Boonzaier, 1988:61). It was also in the late 18th century that Hume noted: ‘I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all other species of men ... to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized people with any other complexion than white’ (Eze, 2000 [1997]:33). Hume went even further to proclaim that ‘such a uniform and constant difference could not happen ... if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men’ (Eze, 2000 [1997]:33). Edward Long followed suit by claiming that ‘Negroes ... [are] void of genius, and seem almost incapable of making any progress in civility or science’ (Bindman, 2002:152). An idea of a natural racial order became a widely proclaimed belief in this century.²²

In 1775, Kant published an essay in which he argued that ‘there are four distinct varieties of the human species, each with a specific “natural disposition”’ (Eze, 2000 [1997]:38). Kant argued that ‘Negroes [sic] and Whites are not different species of humans (for they belong presumably to one stock), but they are different *races*, for each perpetuates itself in every area’ (Eze, 2000 [1997]:40).²³ One of the most influential texts on race in the 18th century was written by Blumenbach. Similar to Kant, he identified the ‘varieties of mankind’, namely Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American and Malay, outlining physical characteristics for each one identified. According to Blumenbach he ‘allotted the first place to the Caucasian’ because he considered it to be the primeval one, the other

²² Although Beattie, a student of Hume, disagreed with Hume’s claims about the natural superiority of whites at the time, he did argue that the ‘inhabitants of Great Britain and France were as savage 2,000 years ago as those of Africa and America are to this day [1770]’. For Beattie, to become civilised required ‘a long time to accomplish’ (Eze, 2000 [1997]:35). In this sense, Beattie did believe that some populations were more civilised than others, which, in terms of being civilised, put Africans and Americans at that stage at an inferior level of civilisation to those who lived in Britain and France.

²³ According to Bindman (2002:171), ‘Kant’s aim in defining precisely the concept of a race was to bring human variety into an orderly relationship with a general idea of the unity of mankind’. Unfortunately, Kant was more successful in creating a focus on human variations than he was able to create a focus on the unity of mankind, which was to take a backseat to the racial hierarchy now constructed.

racess having “degenerated” from this ideal stock’ (Eze, 2000 [1997]:79,84). Blumenbach also advocated the idea that skin colour was connected to ‘other aspects of human form, both external and internal, the colour of the hair and the iris, and even temperament’ (Bindman, 2002:196).

Another key role player was Campher, who, according to Bindman (2002:201), ‘played an equally inadvertent, though even more decisive, part than Blumenbach in giving race the aura of an exact science’. For Campher it was skull size and not skin colour that played a determinate role in racial classification. Campher went on to publish ‘diagrammatic charts of comparative skulls’ in which he ‘created a compelling and endlessly copied image of a hierarchy of mankind from ape to Apollo, with the European placed next to the Greek god, and the African next to the ape’ (Bindman, 2002:203). A visual scale, ‘ranging from animality to godliness’, had been created. Although Campher warned against ‘those who might draw incorrect conclusions from “the striking resemblance between the race of Monkeys and Blacks”’, the problem simply remained that ‘the diagram convey[ed] inescapably a hierarchy that appear[ed] to reinforce the Great Chain of Being’ (Bindman, 2002:205-206). According to Bindman (2002:206), ‘with hindsight misunderstanding seem[ed] inevitable’.

Taking full advantage of ‘the superficial physical differences among the American population and the social roles that these people played’, race was eventually successfully converted into a new and accepted form of social stratification (Smedley, 1998:699). These physical differences were exaggerated to conclude that ‘the Africans and Indians and their descendants were lesser forms of human beings ... their inferiority was natural and/or God-given’ (Smedley, 1998:649). The fact that skin colour was so readily available as a marker of difference made it the foundation of all arguments considering the deeply ingrained differences between human races. A ‘Great Chain of Being’, ranging from savagery and barbarism to civilised, was used to confirm these notions of the superiority and inferiority of certain human races, as well as a ‘sense of human separateness and differences’ (Smedley, 1998:694). A new way of understanding mankind had developed (Garner, 2007:65). Along with the equation of skin colour with a certain identity came the need to attach scientific truth to such deductions. Racial science

was employed to “prove” ‘racial differences that explained cultural, political and technological inequalities’ (Garner, 2007:65). Based on these findings, the superiority of the white race gained acceptance and a subsequent racial hierarchy was constructed (Garner, 2007:65). According to Bernasconi (2001:24), this line of thought ‘was not only a subject of theoretical speculation, it became the characteristic around which all the prejudices against Africans were gathered’. The racial hierarchy that was constructed based on these differences and the formation it adopted – white at the top, black at the bottom – could only be ascribed to the position of power that whites found themselves to be in and their absolute self-proclamation of superiority (Bernasconi, 2001:24). From that moment on, social meanings were to be imposed on physical variations among different human groups. Suddenly it was physical variations, and not kinship or occupation, which provided ‘the basis for the structuring of the total society’ (Smedley, 1998:693).

2.2.2 The 19th century

Montagu (1965:3) argues that ‘race as a widespread secular belief is, in fact, no older than the nineteenth century’. This is when the social idea of race originated, meaning that ‘there exists something called “race” that inseparably links two things together, namely, physical traits and behavioral traits’ (Montagu, 1965:4-5). Arendt (1944:36,62) was in agreement, as she was of the opinion that, although the roots of race-thinking were to be found in the eighteenth century, race consciousness was not to emerge before the nineteenth century. The institution of slavery may have been ‘erected on a strict racial basis’, but the institution was not by definition racially conscious (Arendt, 1944:63). Many authors are in agreement with this argument. According to Cox (2009 [2000]:76), the institution of slavery was driven by exploitative relations towards capitalistic ends. Magubane (2007:19) argues that, as the institution of slavery developed, ‘it became a total system of exploitation of “black” by “white”, based on force and violence and the ideology of white supremacy’. Once Africans became the preferred slaves, ‘no white was a servant’ and no white man did any work that he could get a black person to do for him (Magubane, 2007:19). Arendt, as cited in Visweswaran (2001:212), is of the opinion that, after the abolition of slavery, the main characteristics that defined the relationships between white and black were nullified and this left a vacuum in society. According to

her, 'racism'²⁴ emerged as a part of this vacuum' (Visweswaran, 2001:212). Once the master/slave distinction disappeared it was replaced by discrimination of white against black (Visweswaran, 2001:212). In this way the slave trade definitely played a tremendous role in creating ideas of white superiority and the subsequent inferiority of non-whites.²⁵

The new established hierarchy based on the 'Great Chain of Being' informed various naturalistic doctrines concerning the issue of race, the first of which to arise, based on the assumption that there existed no relationship whatsoever between human races, were the polygenists. Early polygenists favoured the concept of 'species' merely because of their strong belief in the diversity of human beings (Magubane, 2007:24). It was Paul Broca, a polygenist and anthropologist, who first argued for multiple creations, meaning 'man emerged in several places, by several special acts of creation, and the various forms were distinct' (Magubane, 2007:22). According to the polygenists, these various distinct forms comprised the various species of the human race, and these species were 'fixed and immutable' (Magubane, 2007:22). Although this group did not proclaim the idea of racial superiority, they did manage to isolate all people from one another by destroying the 'idea of the natural law as the uniting link' between all peoples (Arendt, 1944:64). The

²⁴ It should be noted that a clear and consistent conceptualisation of this term remains somewhat elusive. Goldberg (1993:97) proposes that we require a conceptualisation 'that does not commit us vacuously to finding racism everywhere but that we nevertheless take its systematic nature as basic'. Such an attempt will be made here. Therefore, while some authors would argue that 'to see race is to be racist', I follow a similar line of argument as Wolpe (1986:110), who is of the opinion that racism involves 'a process of categorization in which real or supposed physical differences serve to ground invidious conceptions of social differentiation'. Racism also involves expressing 'desired, intended, or actual inclusions or exclusions, entitlements or restrictions' (Goldberg, 1993:98). Regardless of how one defines racism, it is important to remember that racism 'cannot be understood merely by references to themes or tropes but only in historical, social, material and cultural contexts' (Garner, 2007:174). It should also be noted here that, 'while racism certainly has not disappeared, it operates nowadays mostly in disguise and under different names' (Eliav-Feldon, Isaac and Ziegler, 2009:1). While the biological notions of race became obsolete, another conception of race emerged, that of 'race as culture' (Goldberg, 1993:70). Hill (2008:11) argues that the racism of old has been replaced by a 'New Racism based on cultural, not biological discrimination'. Race, in this regard, is now identified with 'language group, religion, group habits, norms and customs' (Goldberg, 1993:70). It is this shift in justification that has allowed racism to assume 'more subtle and elusive forms in the contemporary world' (Harrison, 1998:610).

²⁵ It is worth noting here that racism was not always limited to a difference in the colour of one's skin, but in the past rather was based on 'an image of human differences' that included different customs and institutions (Smedley, 1998:694). Many historians are of the opinion that the contempt that the British showed for the Irish 'came close to being racial' (Smedley, 1998:694). For the British, the image of the Irish was synonymous with savagery, and policies and practices were aimed at segregating the Irish from the British during the 16th and 17th centuries (Smedley, 1998:694).

polygenists successfully created a ‘deep abyss of the physical impossibility of human understanding and communication’ (Arendt, 1944:64).

From the American colonies the concept of race and race consciousness spread to the colonising countries of Western Europe (Smedley, 1998:694). In a short period of time, race became ‘a form of social identification and stratification’ based on the physical difference of human groups (Smedley, 1998:694). According to Boonzaier (1988:61), ‘much “scientific” effort was directed at demonstrating’ that there was a causal relationship between mental characteristics and physical ones. Craniometry, the measurement of skulls, and eugenics, which refers to ‘the regulation of breeding in human populations to promote certain traits’, were both used to prove this point (Boonzaier, 1988:61). In essence, it was a new way to ‘prove’ the inferiority of some races while confirming the superiority of others (Boonzaier, 1988:62). Since then, according to Smedley (1998:693), ‘many people in the West have continued to link human identity to external physical features’.

According to the Executive Board of the American Anthropology Association (1998a:712), it was at this time that ‘the growing fields of science began to reflect the public consciousness about human differences’. The doctrine of the polygenists was to be replaced by another doctrine based on human progress, which proclaimed that man was related to animal life. The different species were placed in a racial hierarchy, with Europeans assuming the top position and Africans firmly placed at the bottom – argued to be ‘the least human and closer taxonomically to apes’ (American Anthropology Association, 1998a:712). According to this argument there were only gradual differences that separated man from beast, all of which were in a powerful struggle for survival. Indeed, Darwinism provided the much needed ideological weapons for the notion of race, offering the important concept of “survival of the fittest” – a doctrine that would later inspire the deliberate termination of specific population groups in the 20th century.

According to Montagu (1997 [1942]:68), ‘by the middle of the 19th century racism had become an important weapon of nationalistic and imperialistic politics’. The category of race was now successfully constructed purely ‘on the basis of the force of belief’ (Daynes

and Lee, 2008:224). The idea of a racial “other” who differed so much from the white “self”, who was inferior in every way and less civilised overall, had been created and was to be sustained. This took on the form of a specific ideology,²⁶ a specific belief that there is meaning to our physical differences – mainly skin colour, and its hereditary and permanent qualities. The ideology took the form of racial essentialism.

According to Miles (2009 [2000]:192), the idea of race was ‘created by human beings in certain historical and material conditions, and used to represent and structure the world in certain ways, under historical conditions and for political interests’. He therefore is in agreement with Arendt (1944) that the idea of race is essentially ideological. Indeed, it is not just an ideology. I am inclined to agree with Harrison (1998:621), who more accurately refers to it as ‘an ideological assault’, one that has historically portrayed people of colour, specifically blacks, ‘as the antithesis of civilization, intelligence, and economic advancement’. Moreover, ever since the introduction of the concept of race and the ideology that informs it, most societies have been socialised accordingly (Smedley, 1998:693).

These beliefs, as described above, firmly entrenched the notion of race in the minds of Europeans and were conveniently drawn upon ‘to rationalize the conquest and brutal treatment of Native American populations’, not to mention later conquests on the African continent, and especially ‘the retention and perpetuation of slavery for imported Africans’ (Smedley, 1998: 694). While such treatment of human beings was in strong contradiction to developing trends of freedom, democracy, equality and human rights in Western Europe, the treatment of the native populations of the “New World” was justified on the basis of their physical features and the supposed inferiority that accompanied these.

²⁶ According to Arendt (1944:36), an ideology, in its essence, is certain opinions that are allowed to turn into widely accepted ideas. Arendt (1944:38) describes ideologies as ‘systems which were based upon one single opinion that proved strong enough to attract and persuade a majority of people and broad enough to lead them through various experiences and situations of an average modern life’. Although any ideology seems to be based on an opinion there is still a remarkable difference between the two. An ideology is viewed to possess the solution to everything unknown, it claims to possess ‘the intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws which are supposed to rule nature and man’ (Arendt, 1944:38). Another important difference between an opinion and an ideology is the fact that ideologies develop into ‘obligatory patterns of thought’ to such an extent that, according to Arendt (1944:39), ‘great masses of people will no longer accept any presentation of past or present facts that is not in agreement with these views’. As history has illustrated, ideologies have often been developed, and improved, as powerful political weapons, which often result in the forgetting that such doctrines are not based on fact (Arendt, 1944:39).

According to Smedley (1998:695), the physical differences that had become markers of social status were ‘internalized as sources of individual and group identities’. As a result, this racial ideology remained firmly intact, and was even strengthened, after the abolition of slavery. American society had succeeded in making race ‘equivalent to, and the dominant source of, human identity’ (Smedley, 1998:695). Race, as an element of human identity, was now regarded higher than religion, education, occupation, socioeconomic class, language, and any other attribute that had, up to that moment, largely informed individual and group identity (Smedley, 1998:695). The conquered and the enslaved became the lowest status group in the hierarchy of humans (Smedley, 1998:694).

By the mid-nineteenth century, this arbitrary ranking of people, and the ideology that informed it, had been firmly ingrained not only in America, but also in much of the rest of the world, including those in the Third World who were colonised, and among Europeans themselves (Smedley, 1998:695). This ideology was now not just ‘a strategy for dividing, ranking and controlling colonized people’, as the American Anthropology Association (1998a:712) describes it, but was an ideology that was so deeply entrenched around the world that it *allowed* the dividing, ranking and controlling of colonised people.

2.2.3 The 20th century

By the 20th century, the concept of race had evolved to become a worldview, ‘a body of prejudgments that distorts our ideas about human differences and group behavior’ (American Anthropology Association, 1998a:713). The ideology of racial essentialism remained intact for centuries. According to Montagu (1997 [1942]:32), a student of Anthropology in the 1920s, ‘both English and American anthropologists, generally, continued to teach the nineteenth-century traditional view of “race” in the first half of the 20th century as if it was a demonstrable reality’. It consisted of an established view that ‘human populations were separable into different varieties in which the hierarchy of difference led from the most advanced to the most backward “races”’ (Montagu, 1997 [1942]:31-32). However, sometime around the 1930s it seemed to have met the beginning of its demise. It was at this time that the old theories of racial evolution started to be overthrown by anthropologists (Cravens, 2010:300). It was specifically Boas and his

followers (referred to hereafter as Boasians) who played a critical role in challenging these existing theories. Far ahead of the times, Boas had challenged the perception that people were in several different stages of progress, ranging from ‘barbarism’ to ‘savage’ to ‘civilization’, as early as in 1894. Boas insisted that ‘it was a false conceit that “whites” were more civilized than “non-whites”’ (Cravens, 2010:302). He argued that, due to an immense amount of race-mixture for so many millennia, no pure race existed and, thus, no race could be considered superior to another (Cravens, 2010:302).

It was in the 1920s that the Boasians set their sights on undermining the notions of racial superiority and inferiority by attacking racial segregation and the use of intelligence tests to prove the superiority of the white race and, of course, the inferiority of non-whites (Cravens, 2010:303). In the 1930s, Boas was also able to collapse the whole structure of scientific racial essentialism by pointing out its weak basis, and its lack of valid scientific foundation. It was in the same decade that ‘the myth that intelligence and psychology differed among the races’ was destroyed by Boas’s department at Columbia (Cravens, 2010: 312). Here it was illustrated that the difference in average IQs was explained by the external environment rather than ‘internal psychological motivations’ (Cravens, 2010:312). Montagu made a contribution to these arguments in the 1930s when, based on advances made in human biology and genetics, he argued that ‘fixed clear-cut differences do not exist between breeding populations ... which differ only in the relative frequencies of one or more genes found in all human populations’ (Harrison, 1995:53).

It was only after the Second World War that racial essentialism finally lost all credibility in academic circles (Cravens, 2010:315). It had taken quite a while for the Boasian point of view to settle as a widely accepted view and, in the process, it played an important role in the demise of racial essentialism (Cravens, 2010:304). Of course, this development also came ‘as a result of the shock realizations thrust upon the world by the atrocities of Hitler’s applied eugenics’ (Boonzaier, 1988:62). It was specifically after this development that scientists began to dissociate themselves from the idea that race is a genetic and biological real category (Boonzaier, 1988:62). This was followed by an active attempt to prove that race was simply a myth. In 1951 the foreword of a UNESCO publication stated: ‘Race hatred and conflict thrive on scientifically false ideas and are

nourished by ignorance' (Boonzaier, 1988:62). It was at this stage that Montagu (1997 [1942]:133) asked the all-important question: 'Is there any reason, then, for devaluing a person because of the color of his skin?' His answer was simple, brief, yet telling: '[o]f course there is none, and there can be none from any possible point of view' (Montagu, 1997 [1942]:133). However, despite such active attempts to prove race to be nothing more than a myth, it remained an 'ubiquitous, taken for granted, self-evident common feature of everyday life' (Puttergill, 2008:51).

Although many argued against the notion of race (Boas being one of the first to do so), others persisted in their insistent belief in racial categories. The most notable of such believers was probably Carleton Coon. According to Coon (1963:3), it was already '[a]t the dawn of history [that] literate people of the ancient world were well aware that mankind was divided into a number of clearly differentiated races'. Coon (1963:5) was of the opinion that 'all evidence available from comparative ethnology, linguistics, and prehistoric archeology indicate[d] a long separation of the principle races of man'. Coon (1963:657) did not deny the fact that once, about half a million years ago, there was a single species, namely *Homo erectus*. However, he argued that '*Homo erectus* then evolved into *Homo Sapiens* not once but five times' (Coon, 1963:657), creating five subspecies based in their own geographical territories. Throughout all contradictory arguments, Coon (1966:10) remained of the opinion that race referred to 'a major segment of a species', identifying five such races, accompanied by a short, yet detailed, description of the visible physical characteristics of each race, in his publication *The Living Races of Man*. These physical characteristics included skin colour, eye colour, hair, the shape of the nose, and size and form, all of which are dependent on geographical location (which in turn specifies racial origin). It is clear that, in the mind of Coon, race was a biological attribute of human beings. Thus, even though many academics distanced themselves from the biological existence of race, some remained unconvinced and argued well beyond the Second World War for the existence of race as a biological category. Yet, as we will see in the following section, the consensus seemed to be that race was nothing more than a social invention.

2.3 The current state of the concept of race

Since the introduction of the concept of race it has been surrounded by a very heated debate, mainly among anthropologists, but also in other disciplines. Its meaning and significance, as well as the accuracy of early biological claims, have been contested for some time (Harrison, 1995:50). At present, most evolutionary biologists ‘reject the notion that there are special “racial” traits’ (Templeton, 1998:632). However, as illustrated by nineteenth century arguments, this was not always the case. The belief that Europeans, Africans and Indians were all of separate species is a case in point. A closer inspection of the evolutionary genetics of race revealed that, genetically speaking, there is more diversity within the population of a specific race than there is diversity between different races, as, for the last 200 000 years, human populations ‘have been interconnected by gene flow’ (Templeton, 1998:646).²⁷ Indeed, it is important to remember that, although it has been established that humans originated on the African continent and from there spread to the rest of the world, they also had the ability to move back to the continent (Templeton, 1998:636). Therefore there was a constant and ‘recurrent genetic interchange’ among human populations (Templeton, 1998:636).

Such an approach to genetic evolution, as described above, debunks the myth that there ever existed a ‘pure’ race – at least not for the last 200 000 years. In the same breath it could be added that ‘human “races” are not valid subspecies’ (Templeton, 1998:636, 646). This approach to genetic evolution follows the rationale of the trellis model (see Figure 1 below), which illustrates the interconnectedness of the human population.

²⁷ A study revealed that ‘most human genetic diversity exists as differences among individuals within populations while only 15.6% can be used to genetically differentiate the major human “race”’ (Templeton, 1998:633).

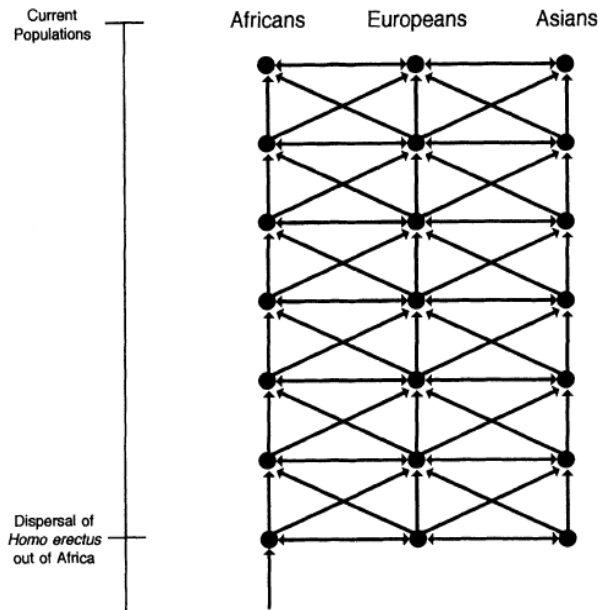


Figure 2: The Trellis Model

The large dots represent populations in Africa and also those that dispersed to settle in Eurasia. The model illustrates the interconnectedness of gene flow among these populations in order to debunk the myth that evolutionary sublineages ever existed, or that independent races ever existed. Lines with arrows on both ends signify gene flow among these populations, while lines with one arrowhead signify genetic descent (Templeton, 1998:636).

Smedley (1998:699) is in agreement with this approach, as he states that ‘biophysical variations are seen as continuous and gradual, overlapping population boundaries, fluid, and subject to evolutionary changes’. This view was officially adopted by the American Anthropology Association when they released a statement on the biological aspects of race, in which they first identified the genetic diversity among human populations and then stated that ‘pure races, in the sense of genetically homogeneous populations, do not exist in the human species today, nor is there any evidence that they have ever existed in the past’ (American Anthropology Association, 1998b:714). It is widely accepted, in scientific circles, that observable traits such as skin colour have no correlation to physical and biological traits. It has also been found that brain measurements, or cranial capacity, cannot be cited as proof of racial inferiority or superiority. Thus, Shanklin (1998:672) is of the opinion that race ‘does not reflect a fact of nature, but instead is a label invented by humans that permits us to sort people into groups’. At the end of the twentieth century,

the American Anthropology Association (1998a:713) agreed that ‘racial beliefs constitute myths about diversity in the human species and about the abilities and behavior of people homogenized into racial categories’. Indeed, the concept of race and race ideology had finally, after their development over centuries, been reduced to a myth – something that bears ‘no relationship to the reality of human capabilities’ (American Anthropology Association, 1998a:713). Present-day inequalities between ‘human races’ are ascribed not to biological inheritance, but to ‘products of historical and contemporary social, economic, educational and political circumstances’ (American Anthropology Association, 1998a:713). According to Montagu (1997 [1942]:46), ‘the truth is that the “deceptively clear label” [the concept of race] ... obscures and renders divisible what is indivisible’.

Once the concept of race, and especially beliefs in the biological significance of race, were proven to be social inventions informed by unfounded beliefs and nothing more than a myth, many believed that race would cease to be a significant concept in society. Many believed that once people were educated with this knowledge, ‘their unfounded attitudes and prejudices would eventually wither away’ (Harrison, 1998:611). The argument was that the demotion of the concept of race from accepted fact to absolute myth would encourage individuals to question their prejudices and that they would ‘no longer have reason or motivation to have and act upon racist intentions’ (Harrison, 1998:611). The belief that the power of truth will ‘transform unjust social conditions’ has unfortunately been a very naïve one indeed (Harrison, 1998:611). What these believers clearly underestimated was how entrenched the ideology of race had become in everyday society. The belief in race as a category has given the concept momentum to the point where it has been given such force that it refuses to ‘wither in the face of the claims of science’ (Daynes and Lee, 2008:224). The social memory of the past had given ‘a sense of reality to experiences’ in order for old beliefs to remain in the present (Daynes and Lee, 2008:224). For, as Montagu (1997 [1942]:155) argues, ‘[o]ld myths never die. Nor do they fade away. Not, certainly, if they are related to “race”’. Although race is considered a myth, there is certainly a significant reality to it in everyday society. Like Alcoff (2001:267), one has to conclude that race is socially real. Somewhere it has been ‘attributed with the character of permanence’, it has become something in itself (Miles,

2009 [2000]:182). It has taken on a life of its own – outside of biological relevance or accuracy.

It is as Montagu (1997 [1942]:176) concludes, '[n]o matter if words and beliefs are false, if men define them as real, they will be real in their consequences'. Although the current consensus among anthropologists, as well as in wider academic circles, is that race 'is nothing more and nothing less than a social invention', concluding that, as a concept, race reveals little about a person's intrinsic or potential qualities, race still seems to reveal quite a lot about the 'allocation of power, privilege, and wealth' among physically differing populations (Smedley, 1998:698-699). We find that race and class still correlate to a large degree in many countries around the world, and specifically in South Africa, where the visible correlations between race and class are undeniable. As Distiller and Steyn (2004:3) argue: '[r]ace (and class) have been the master narrative of most South African texts in the post-apartheid context'. This hints to the fact that, although considered a myth, race remains a meaningful and significant concept in society. In many instances it has even become part of institutions and legislation, making it even more difficult to completely do away with the concept. Indeed, we find ourselves in a time and place where race is 'neither an illusion nor a fact, [it] operates ... as a complex of meanings transformed by political frameworks' (Shanklin, 1998:671). Such realities have sparked the development of Critical Race Theory (CRT),²⁸ which posits that racism is being structurally perpetuated through 'ideological and social processes which discriminate against others on the basis of their being associated with different racial or ethnic group membership' (Essed, 2002:203). In this sense, CRT refers to the 'everyday racism'²⁹ in society. This is racism that most of us are unaware of, as it involves 'the continuous, often unconscious, exercise of power predicated on taking for granted the privileging of whiteness, the universality of Western criteria of human progress, and the primacy of European (derived) cultures' (Essed, 2002:204). For Lawrence (1995:236),

²⁸ Critical race theory (CRT) 'first emerged as a counterlegal scholarship to the positivist and liberal legal discourse of civil rights. This scholarly tradition argues against the slow pace of racial reform in the United States. Critical race theory begins with the notion that racism is normal in American society' (Ladson-Billings, 1998:7).

²⁹ A term used by Essed (2002) to refer to the type of racism that is persistently felt yet difficult to pinpoint. 'As a result these microinjustices become normal, fused into familiar practices, practices taken for granted, attitudes and behaviors sustaining racial injustice' (Essed, 2002:204).

‘everyday racism’ is directly linked to structures of racial inequality and racial discrimination, which remains ‘influenced by unconscious racial motivation’.³⁰

The fact that, on the one hand, race has been discarded as a “non-existent” category, yet highlighted as a socially salient category, thereby confirming its existence, has revealed the paradoxical nature of this concept. While its existence is denied, race ‘continues to determine job prospects, available places to live, potential friends and lovers, reactions from police’, etc. (Alcoff, 2001:269). The social, economic and political significance is hard to deny even in its supposed absence. Practices based on the folk idea³¹ of race have persisted, unintentionally, to the extent where it has often ‘perpetuated oppressive power relations between populations presumed to be essentially different’ (Harrison, 1995:65). Thus, according to Hill (2008:10), ‘many people remain convinced’ that racial differences have a significant part to play in society and, although scientists may claim that race is not a real category, ‘their position has no influence on the man on the street, who can see perfectly well that differences exist’ (Todorov, 2009 [2000]:69). Race became an ideology and, eventually, a forgotten ideology, to situate itself as a social fact. As Nietzsche (1979:82) argued: ‘Only through forgetfulness can man ever achieve the illusion of possessing a “truth”’. The notion of race became ‘uncritically accepted ... [to] play a role in the social process not merely as an ideological form, but as an immediate factor acting as both determining cause and concrete means’ (Miles, 2009 [2000]:191).

Another interesting area in which we encounter the paradox of race, one that definitely is worth mentioning here, is in medical science. While race is considered by most academics not to be a biological category, it seems as if bodily differences between populations may prove to be significant in medical science. It has been found that certain

³⁰ In his study, Lawrence (1995:236) asks: ‘Does the black child in a segregated school experience less stigma and humiliation because the local school board did not consciously set out to harm her? Are blacks less prisoners of the ghetto because the decision that excludes them from an all-white neighborhood was made with property values and not race in mind? He concludes that ‘[t]he facts of racial inequality are the real problem’ (Lawrence, 1995:236).

³¹ According to Shanklin (1998:671), the folk idea, that is, the idea that race is attributed to skin colour, persists in society. Hill (2008:6) describes folk theory as the belief that ‘race is a basic category of human biological variation, and that each human being can be assigned to a race’. Thus, for folk theorists, race is a biologically real category (Hill, 2008:6).

gene mutations are ‘unequally distributed across human groups’ (Epstein, 2007:208).³² In addition, it has also been found that responses to medical treatment differ depending on the recipient’s “racial” profile (Epstein, 2007:209).³³ Yet these claims are still viewed as largely controversial and, regarding possible correlation between race and drug responses, scientists have been unable to reach consensus (Epstein, 2007:210). For, as Epstein (2007:212) argues, ‘there is no single racial or ethnic group within which everyone shares this – or any other – genetic trait’.

Indeed, according to Harrison (1998:613), ‘the social significance of the invidious distinction called “race” is hardly declining’ in society. Even in academic circles there are still those who persist in their belief that race is a biologically salient category. A controversial book investigating the IQ differences in different human populations, *The Bell Curve*, was published as late as 1994. In this book, Herrnstein and Murray (1994:269) argue that ‘large human populations differ in many ways, both cultural and biological’, and that these populations ‘differ at least slightly in their cognitive characteristics’. When this argument was applied to African-Americans and European-Americans, Herrnstein and Murray (1994:269) claimed that, based on test scores, ‘the average white person tests higher than about 84% of blacks’. Herrnstein and Murray (1994:270) found that ‘blacks and whites differ most on the tests that are best measures of g, or general intelligence’.

Herrnstein and Murray (1994:276) posed the following question: ‘[d]o blacks score differently from whites on standardized tests of cognitive ability?’ Their answer matched the overall controversy of their book. It is worth quoting here at length.

If the samples are chosen to be representative of the American population, the answer has been yes for every known test of cognitive ability that meets basic psychometric standards of reliability and validity. The answer is also yes for almost

³² In 1996, AIDS researchers ‘discovered that a mutation in a gene called CCR5 conferred greater resistance to infection with HIV or progression of disease’ (Epstein, 2007:208). However, this mutation was specifically found to exist in its highest frequency among Europeans, with lower frequencies found in Asia and the Middle East, and to be almost completely absent – found only as isolated individual occurrences – outside of these regions (Epstein, 2007:208).

³³ It was found that African-Americans experience more severe hypertension – a cardiovascular condition, but, that ‘in comparison to whites, their elevated blood pressure is less likely to be reduced by monotherapy with certain classes of drugs... and more likely to be reduced by other classes’ (Epstein, 2007:209).

all of the studies in which the black and white samples are matched on some special characteristics – samples of juvenile delinquents, for example, or of graduate students – but there are exceptions (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994:276).

For them, such a result suggests genetic roots. Herrnstein and Murray (1994:286-287) argued that, even when socio-economic status is factored, their findings still led to the conclusion that whites scored higher than blacks overall. It thus becomes clear that, with all the positive developments made in the 20th century regarding the concept of race, some academics have not given up on the fact that racial groups do in fact exist and that it is genetically codified for every group of human beings; in other words, that race is a biological concept. The widespread belief in the biological reality of race has persisted even in the face of contradictory evidence.

2.4 Conclusion

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the concept of race was elaborated to the point where it became accepted as a reality – allegedly found in all sorts of scientific evidence. Along with the establishment of racial categories came the belief that certain characteristics could be ascribed to each category. It was specifically in the 19th century that ‘differences among Europeans, Africans and Indians’ were magnified and, as a result, a ‘rigid hierarchy of socially exclusive categories’ was established, leading the way for unequal rank and status differences based on physical differences (American Anthropology Association, 1998a:712). These visible characteristics were often ‘correlated with rational capacity, epistemic reliability, moral condition, and aesthetic status’ (Alcoff, 2001:278). Of course, this belief was accompanied with the belief that these categories were inherently different from each other, each ascribed their proper position in the social hierarchy.

Based on the theories of Marx and Engels, Noble (2000:85) concludes that the values and opinions that shape society within a certain era are those of the ruling class. As they were the dominant property owners and often slave owners, this is a position that has been frequented by whites in the past. Thus, the historical development of whiteness was accompanied by a belief in the ‘naturalness of white supremacy’ (Magubane, 2003:115). As a result of such beliefs, whites occupied the top position on the social hierarchy. The

accepted natural superiority of whites came to be, and remained, without question, while blacks were regarded as the polar opposite (Harrison, 1995:51). According to Puttergill (2008:90), ‘a clear distinction was drawn between tribal black and civilized white resulting in the maintenance of social difference’. Indeed, since the beginning of the 20th century, ‘one of the major projects in the social sciences has been to refute the racial science of the nineteenth century’ (Daynes and Lee, 2008:2). But at the beginning of the 21st century we find ourselves facing a new challenge concerning race. In the words of Daynes and Lee (2008:3), ‘a problematic paradox arose: on the one hand, it denies the natural reality of race and, on the other, it has to assert the social reality of race’. One has to agree with Fuchs (2001:67), who is of the opinion that ‘to say something is constructed, or exists for an observer, is *not* paramount to saying that it does not really exist, or is somehow less real, objective, and true’. Thus, for lack of a better option, we are simply forced to acknowledge the social reality of race – a reality that has succeeded in persisting even in the light of contradictory evidence.

It is specifically in South Africa that these historically developed racial categories form the basis of the social continuities of an apartheid past. The South African case proves to be a fitting example of the inescapability of the alleged social reality named race. In the following chapter, the failure of South Africa’s social transition in a post-apartheid context will be addressed through its history of discrimination and segregation based on the supposed racial differences between its established racial categories.

CHAPTER 3

RACIAL CATEGORIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS?

3.1 Introduction

South Africa has a long, and one may add notorious, historical engagement with race and racial categories. From the first Dutch settlement in the 17th century to British domination, the Anglo-Boer War and the subsequent development of Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state, these developments would all factor into the general development of racial categories in South Africa. It was ultimately through apartheid legislation that the racial divide was pushed to its limits until close to the end of the twentieth century, when it formally met its demise with the 1994 democratic elections. All of the above laid a firm foundation for attitudes and beliefs regarding race, and would ultimately support these beliefs well beyond the official demise of apartheid. These beliefs have become so entrenched in the minds of South Africans, and in this case specifically the white Afrikaans-speakers in my research area, that, although the 1994 election inspired a political transition, it did not inspire a social transition and in this sense it proved to be no ‘road to Damascus’ for my research subjects. While the 1994 elections ensured a transformation of power and laws, placing all individuals on an equal footing in terms of the Constitution, it will be illustrated in this chapter that my research participants are still plagued by the racial attitudes of old.

This chapter is in essence concerned with the history of a country and its people. An attempt will be made to provide background to the main argument posed in this thesis. It is a necessary attempt to explain present circumstances through an inescapable past. This chapter will be concerned with the early development of race relations in South Africa – tracing them all the way back to the first Dutch settlement in the seventeenth century – as well as the more devious turn they took in the twentieth century. The role of ideology, specifically Afrikaner nationalism, and also the role of academic justification, including

Volkekunde, will be discussed to illustrate the tremendous impact that these two factors had in the elaboration of racial categories and the apartheid state. Special attention will specifically be given to the end of apartheid and to the post-apartheid context in which South Africa currently finds itself. It will become evident that, as Daynes and Lee (2008) argue, the socially constructed category named race, and the attitudes and beliefs that accompany it, have remained relevant in the present and have become normalised to the point that they are very hard to escape. South Africa and my research area provide evidence for such an argument.

3.2 Race relations in South Africa: A history of segregation

According to Davies (2004:122), racial hierarchies have been part of South African society ‘since the beginnings of the colony’. It was already at the outset of the Dutch settlement in the Cape in the mid-seventeenth century that native inhabitants were regarded as savages who could not be trusted (Reddy, 2000:10). Amongst other things, these indigenous peoples were described as lacking morals, being brutish, deceitful and lazy, and having thievish values (Reddy, 2000:16). It was already in the first few days after Van Riebeeck’s arrival in the Cape that he ‘issued a proclamation to regulate interaction between Dutch East India Company employees and the indigenous Khoikhoi’ (Maylam, 2001:32).³⁴

In the 17th and 18th centuries there were laws that discriminated against the racial other, and there was ‘the emergence of a racial order’, but this order was ‘not defined explicitly in racial terms’ (Maylam, 2001:37). This order was rather based on legal status groups (Giliomee, 2004:29).³⁵ But a close, yet not complete, correlation between race and class existed between these groups – ‘the first two were almost entirely white, and no whites belonged to the other two groups’ (Maylam, 2001:37). Thus, the society that developed under Dutch rule consisted of masters and slaves, which ‘constituted a class division that corresponded largely to a color division’ (Reddy, 2000:24). Reddy (2000:27) is of the

³⁴ Early attempts at segregation included the attempt to create ‘to create a border from the Salt River mouth to the mountain ... to separate the white inhabitants of the Cape Peninsula from the Khoikhoi’, and the introduction of pass laws, which were formally instated under Ordinance 49 in 1828 (Maylam, 2001:32).

³⁵ These legal status groups consisted of ‘company servants (employees), freeburghers, slaves and “Hottentots” (Khoisan)’ (Maylam, 2001:37).

opinion that ‘the significance of Cape Slavery’ was that it ‘establish[ed] color as the sign of difference between privileged and subaltern’.³⁶

Before the late eighteenth century the status of the great majority of people in South Africa was determined by their legal status. Previously there had been no reason to focus on “colour” or racial difference. As Giliomee (2004:39) argues, a slave was treated as the lesser simply because he or she was a slave. But when free blacks started to become a more visible part of the population, the government sought regulations to control these blacks and to socially exclude them (Giliomee, 2004:39). This was best illustrated by the policies of the Boer republics. In Natalia, the first Boer republic, later to be claimed by the British, votes were ‘restricted to adult white men’ as prescribed in the constitution of 1839 (Maylam, 2001:95). A system of indirect rule was also implemented through the appointment of chiefs, and ‘Africans were restricted to “native reserves” to free up land for occupation by White farmers’ (EISA, 2011). Accordingly, a pass system was also implemented for African labourers, and the republic ‘rapidly took on the appearance of a white state in which Africans were treated as a subordinate labouring class’ (Maylam, 2001:95). In the Orange Free State (OFS) and the South African Republic (SAR), racially exclusive constitutions were also drawn up. In 1854 the OFS constitution ‘limited citizenship to whites’, while the SAR constitution of 1858 stated that ‘the people desire to permit no equality between coloured people and the white inhabitants of the country, either in Church or State’ (Maylam, 2001:96). This led to a complete separation, with the Dutch Reformed Church being reserved for whites only, while the Sendingkerk (Mission Church) was reserved for all others (Worden, 1994:70). Pass laws were also instated in the OFS and SAR, and Africans were not permitted to own land (Worden, 1994:70).³⁷ The creation of the Boer republics constituted highly discriminatory behaviour towards

³⁶ It is worth noting that intermarriage did indeed take place between white colonial masters and freed slaves (coloured women) due to a shortage of women, but ‘such a solution carried its own contradiction within the hierarchical structure’ (Hall, 1999:196). Intermarriage of this kind, however, was not the norm in Cape colonial society.

³⁷ While the Boer republics were characterised by discriminatory policies and policies of racial exclusion, Maylam (2001:99) argues that it should not be explained through ‘ethnic assumptions – assumptions about the “boer character,” the “Afrikaner tradition”, and so on’. The discrimination in these republics rather ‘arose out of competition for resources than out of any deep-seated antagonism towards racial “others”’ (Maylam, 2001:99). It was thus ‘closely tied to economic interests’ (Maylam, 2001:139).

the racial other – ‘Africans were subjected to labour tribute, cattle extractions, taxation and land alienation’ (EISA, 2011).

By the late 1870s, ‘whites had long been accustomed to domination and privilege, and to the exclusion of blacks from the state or church and some residential areas’ (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1991:4).³⁸ According to Giliomee and Schlemmer (1991:10), this idea stemmed from ‘the desire of whites to create towns and cities ... uncorrupted by the “lower” civilization and “unhygienic” standards of blacks’. In 1894, the Glen Grey Act was passed by the Rhodes administration in the eastern Cape. This act ‘limited the amount of land each African family could own’ (Worden, 1994:48). Similar legislation was passed in other parts of the Cape by 1910 (Worden, 1994:48). At the very start of the twentieth century, segregation was legalised and Africans were compelled to ‘live in segregated compounds and locations under municipal control’ (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1991:11).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, overtly racial legislation was already in place, but it was only ‘in the period between the end of the South African War in 1902 and 1930s that a cogent ideology of segregation emerged and was implemented’ (Worden, 1994:72). Amongst the most important of this racial legislation were the Natives Land Act of 1913, the Native Affairs Act of 1920, and the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. The Natives Land Act isolated specific areas as African reserves. According to this act, ‘Africans were prohibited from occupying land outside the reserves, except as labour tenants, nor could they purchase land outside the reserves’ (Maylam, 2001:148). According to Parliament, the purpose of the act was to ‘ensure the territorial segregation of the races’ (Wolpe, 1995:71). This act proved to be important ‘in the wider political economy of segregation and apartheid in South Africa’ (Maylam, 2001:148). The Native Affairs Act ‘set up tribal councils for the administration of the reserves and advisory councils for Africans in urban areas’ (Worden, 1994:74). Through this act, Africans were denied ‘political representation in the central bodies of government in the Union’

³⁸ This however does not mean that white oppression was not met with resistance. Between 1880 and 1910 a number of rebellions were staged by Africans (Ndzundza Ndebele rebellion, 1882; Bagananwa rebellion, 1894; Bhambada rebellion, 1906). The first African political group was also created by an educated African elite during this same period, arguing that African identity had ‘transcended tribalism’ (EISA, 2011).

(Worden, 1994:74). The Natives (Urban Areas) Act ‘empowered municipalities to establish segregated locations for Africans [and] to implement a rudimentary system of influx control’ (Maylam, 2001:149). In essence, this act laid down ‘the principles of residential segregation, influx control, fiscal segregation and segregated local government’ (Maylam, 2001:149). In 1936, Hertzog’s proposed Native Bills were finally passed and the idea of territorial segregation was starting to be realised (Schmidt, 1996:172-173).

It becomes evident that the first two decades of the 20th century ‘were crucial in the development of South Africa’s racial order’ (Maylam, 2001:143). Over the course of a few centuries, all ‘non-white inhabitants of South Africa were constructed as the generalized Other’ (Reddy, 2010:10-11). More importantly, these categories were regarded as objective and treated as mere commonsense (Reddy, 2010:13). What was particularly distinctive in the South African case was ‘the range and extent of its discriminatory legislation’ (Beinart and Dubow, 1995:4). Racial segregation stretched ‘from education and health, to transport and recreation’ (Beinart and Dubow, 1995:4). This system eventually ‘matured from segregation to official apartheid policy in the second half of the century’ (Beinart and Dubow, 1995:3). As can be deduced from the argument above, the stage was already set for apartheid long before 1948, as ‘the South African statute books were filled with laws that were racially, culturally, and linguistically discriminatory’ since the eighteenth century (De Villiers, 1988:271). Once segregation was legalised in the early twentieth century, these segregationist policies escalated to form a comprehensive race policy that would guide South Africa through most of the century. But for this another development needs to be taken into account, namely Afrikaner nationalism.

3.2.1 Afrikaner nationalism

By the start of the 20th century a new development that would greatly impact on the course of legal segregation in South Africa was starting to take shape, namely Afrikaner nationalism. Inspired by British imperialism and the Anglo-Boer War, but also by other issues, amongst which the ‘native question’ and the poor white question were the most prominent, Afrikaner nationalism inspired ideas of a cohesive and homogeneous *volk* –

one that needed protection as a minority and an oppressed people. This resonates with the idea of imagined communities explored by Anderson (2006 [1983]).³⁹ Anderson (2006 [1983]) draws on many forms of collective experience to explain how imagined communities are formed.⁴⁰ For him, nations become imagined and modelled through ‘social change and different forms of consciousness’ (Anderson, 2006 [1983]:141). In essence, it is shared experience that creates a sense of community – an imagined community of sameness and unity.

The Anglo-Boer War can be viewed as a ‘vital progression in Afrikaner nationalist history’ (Davies, 2004:124). It is at this stage that Afrikaners came to be viewed as a homogeneous group, fighting the British in order to guard against domination and to ensure legal rights and freedoms for Afrikaners. According to Davies (2004:124), this previously fragmented group now ‘discovered a tangible and separate culture’. As soon as the War was over, Afrikaners had started to develop political opposition in response to English domination and in order to immediately address the lack of recognition of Afrikaner rights. The language movement,⁴¹ as well as the Anglo-Boer War and the subsequent political movement,⁴² were key to the creation of Afrikaner unity and Afrikaner nationalism (Schmidt, 1996:241). This movement marked the drive among Afrikaners to set themselves apart and to isolate and preserve themselves – an idea that would guide their actions for the remainder of the 20th century. Firmly based on the Afrikaans language and Christian (Protestant) principles, an Afrikaner *volk* came into being with ambitions of elevating their status in the economic and political sphere above that of their competitors – the blacks and the English (Schmidt, 1996:241). It would later become evident that, for them, only one course of action would ensure such protection –

³⁹ For Anderson (2006 [1983]:6), an imagined community is imagined ‘because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’.

⁴⁰ One of the many examples Anderson (2006 [1983]:44) draws on is the role of a shared language, specifically print language, to inspire a sense of unity. Another example is a shared journey; whether it be a religious pilgrimage or a secular counterpart such as The Great Trek, a shared meaningful journey will inspire feelings of togetherness and sameness (Anderson, 2006 [1983]:141).

⁴¹ Important in this period was the start of the Afrikaans language movement, where Afrikaans was promoted to become not only a spoken but also a written language. The recognition of the language would also translate into the recognition of a distinct people – the white Afrikaners.

⁴² According to Schmidt (1996:134), the struggle for Afrikaans ‘became synonymous with the struggle against English hegemony’. This movement, above all, wanted to establish Afrikaners as a ‘distinct *volk* and ethnic group’ (Schmidt, 1996:134).

legal racial segregation in all aspects of society. Central to realising these ambitions were the 'native question' and the poor white question.

3.2.2 The native and the poor white questions

The native question surfaced immediately after the Anglo-Boer War and, for Afrikaners, it was clear from the beginning that the native question 'had to be solved in such a way as to secure the interests of the white population' (Schmidt, 1996:143). The problematic of the native question was how the white minority could relate and function with a black majority and how, considering the circumstances, the whites, more specifically Afrikaners, could 'uplift themselves over and above the blacks' (Schmidt, 1996:143).

This problem was highlighted right after the War when there was a sudden influx of blacks into urban areas. It was already in 1903 that the South African Native Affairs Commission was established to address the issue (Schmidt, 1996:144). Under the leadership of Milner, the problem concerning the natives was structured along a hierarchy of more and less civilised. At this stage, the British administration (that ruled South Africa until 1910, when the country became a Union as part of the British Empire) concluded that the white man must rule

because that is the only possible means of raising the black man, not to our [the white man's] level of civilization – which is doubtful whether he would ever attain – but to a much higher level than that which he at present occupies (Schmidt, 1996:144).

While the Native Affairs Commission used the testimonies of officials, missionaries, traders, farmers and educationalists in order to define 'the true nature of the Native', the outcome of their findings was reflected in the justification of discriminatory legislation. According to Schmidt (1996:145), the eventual report published by the Commission revealed 'the obvious necessity the Commission felt to define the native as distinct from the white'. The natives were framed as different and separate from the whites, and, due to unbridgeable and irreconcilable differences, were to be kept this way (Schmidt, 1996:150).

A few decades later the same problem would manifest itself under a different name, namely the poor white question. In this case, poor was determined not only in terms of physical and economic measurements, but rather represented a standard beneath which no white person should live if they wanted to be treated as white (Giliomee, 2004:272). The sense of an inherent superiority, a feeling that expectations are always higher for whites than coloureds or blacks simply because they are white, was evident. In the early, as well as extended, aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War, many Afrikaner families 'were sinking into poverty, indolence and misery' (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:63). The scorched earth policy of the British had left many families destitute, leaving them little choice but to move to urban areas in the hope of finding work. However, here families were frequently forced to live in slum conditions, side by side with black populations (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:63). When looking for jobs, the whites realised that they now had to compete with a large number of blacks. For the National Party leaders the answer to the problem was to simply 'remove the competition' (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:64).

The feeling that there were irreconcilable differences, that black and white could never be considered to function on the same level, seems to have always been prominent in the minds of the white rulers. This type of argumentation remained fixed for the better part of a century, from Milner, who proclaimed in 1903 that blacks would never reach the level of civilisation of whites, to Hertzog (Prime Minister and National Party affiliate), who, when addressing the same issue in 1926 (23 years later), stated, '[l]ook ... at the difference in civilization' (Schmidt, 1996:159). Not for one moment was the idea of true equality entertained, for, based on the levels of civilisation, there was no comparison to be made – a sentiment that can be found in my research area to this day. 'They are just not on the same level as us', was one of the remarks made by an older female respondent, while a disgruntled male respondent in his mid-thirties claimed that 'they are just closer to animals' (all referring to the racial other).

3.2.3 The apartheid state

Although much of apartheid 'reads like simple racism, like mere rationalization to justify odious acts', De Villiers (1988:310) says it is much more complicated than that. The fierce drive for segregation was, in essence, a drive for preservation, to guard against

“foreign” cultures and possible revenge and, finally, an insurance of white privilege (De Villiers, 1988:310). Thus, according to De Villiers (1988:310), ‘apartheid is a complex combination of many emotions’. For Afrikaners it was indeed an emotional affair. Apartheid was the road ‘that seemed to promise them certainty and security’ (De Villiers, 1988:382).

Although the stage seemed to have been set for apartheid before its official inception in 1948, segregationist laws escalated at an alarming rate once the National Party came to power. Amongst these laws were the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949), which prohibited whites from marrying non-whites; the Immorality Amendment Act (1950), which prohibited whites from engaging in any form of sexual contact with non-whites; the Group Areas Act (1950), which held that each race was to develop in its own designated area, separate from the others; the Population Registration Act (1952), which involved the racial classification of every South African; the Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act (1952), which entrenched the pass laws of old even more; the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953), which prevented daily socialising, as different races had to use separate facilities such as bathrooms, cafeterias, etc.; and the Bantu Education Act (1953), which involved the segregation of schools (De Villiers, 1988:316-317). All of these laws were designed and implemented to racially segregate the people of South Africa. Ballard (2004:54) argues that the implementation of these racially-based laws was in essence an attempt to create a Europe in Africa.⁴³

It is evident that the apartheid government was first and foremost concerned with race; the laws that they implemented are testimony to this. According to Seekings (2008:1), ‘the South African system of apartheid stood out as an extreme attempt to order a society explicitly and systematically according to racial categories’. During its reign, the apartheid government instigated and implemented laws using ‘racial criteria to discriminate against certain sections of their populations’ (Peires, 2008:10). The Population Registration Act of 1952 deserves special attention in this regard. As briefly mentioned in the previous paragraph, this Act allowed the state ‘to classify every person

⁴³ According to Ballard (2004:54), ‘[w]hat the colonial and apartheid projects in South Africa had created were identity-affirming spaces for European settlers within which Europeans could feel *at home*’.

along the lines of color, “race” and ethnicity’ (Reddy, 2000:131). Four distinct categories were created into which citizens were divided. Any given person within the borders of South Africa was either white, Indian, coloured, or Bantu (black). These classifications were entered into the Population Register, which became ‘the Bible of the Apartheid state’ (Reddy, 2000:139).

James and Lever (2001:31-32) are of the opinion that ‘the fourfold path of South African racial demography is both a biological fiction and a social reality’. The introduction of these racial group categories by the apartheid government ‘entrenched and further reinforced the myriad of social processes by which populations sort and label themselves’ (James and Lever, 2001:32). According to Reddy (2000:130), in South Africa ‘the “racial category” was everything; individual persons did not exist outside the group categorization’. Indeed, the categories bestowed upon the peoples of South Africa were not only entrenched in a matter that confirmed otherness, it also became a way of confirming the self. These racial categories were created by the state and, in effect, were treated as “real” categories. According to Reddy (2000:130), ‘soon enough the Apartheid social formation made it difficult to separate the world from text’. To this day, these are the racial categories cited when speaking of the racial other. In describing a person, my respondents will definitely place their description within one of these categories: ‘He is that black worker you saw the other day ...’ or ‘... that coloured man with the crippled leg ...’ or ‘she looks kind of Indian’ are the type of descriptions I encountered quite often.

3.2.4 The role of *Volkekunde*

In the light of my research question and the themes that I explore, along with the field of study I find myself in, it would be impossible to ignore, or fail to address, the role of one specific, and quite influential, stream of South African anthropologists in creating, embedding and perpetuating certain beliefs concerning the racial and cultural ‘other’. South African anthropology, in its beginning stages, was viewed as a discipline that ‘could ensure a conception of the native and especially a solution to the Native question’ (Schmidt, 1996:175). In the words of Schmidt (1996:175), ‘anthropology was looked to as a source of applied knowledge that would be of great value to native administration’.

In its essence, the discipline was of practical importance (Schmidt, 1996:196). I do not intend to provide a full historical development of ‘*Volkekunde*’ – as anthropology came to be known in Afrikaans, yet it is imperative to highlight its tremendous impact and its deliberate use to shape the policies of the National Party before and during the apartheid period.

According to Hammond-Tooke (1999:124), when we speak of the ‘rise’ of *Volkekunde* it does not refer to ‘a major change in the kind of anthropology taught at Afrikaans-language universities in the post-war years’. This particular stream of Anthropology was mostly concerned with the native questions and Afrikaner problems such as the poor white question. According to Schmidt (1996:259), ‘*Volkekunde* was having to deal with two competing processes of ethnogenesis: that of the Afrikaners and that of the blacks’. Especially from the 1930s onwards, the discipline *Volkekunde* was used to ‘prove’ the inherent and irreconcilable differences between whites and blacks in order to ultimately justify discriminatory segregationist policies.

Two names are unavoidable in the discussion of *Volkekunde*, that of Werner Eiselen⁴⁴ and Pieter Johannes Coertze.⁴⁵ Eiselen proposed that, to solve both the native question and the poor white question, each group ‘would be able to solve their problems through social and economic upliftment and solidarity within each group’ (Schmidt, 1996:262). The idea of segregation and separate development, and ultimately apartheid, had been planted. Eiselen was ‘to play a leading role in [the] conceptualization and implementation’ of legal racial separation (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:64). According to Coertze (1983:98), the relationship between the Europeans and non-whites was always very tense, dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth century. There existed widespread distrust of the other, as non-whites were viewed as lying, thieving and barbaric peoples (Coertze, 1983:65). For this reason, interaction between Europeans and

⁴⁴ Eiselen, who would later come to be known as ‘one of the architects of apartheid’, was preoccupied with both the native question and the poor white question and invested a considerable amount of thought in addressing these issues (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:61).

⁴⁵ According to Coertze, the particular value of *Volkekunde* was that it studied ‘people in total groups and not in a number of different compartments’, with each particular *volk*, or group, having its ‘own cultural pattern’. Coertze also viewed a *volk* as an organised and organic, yet closed, unit, intimately united with a specific culture (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:130-132).

non-whites was limited (Coertze, 1983:71). The reason for limiting contact, one that seems to stand its ground to this day, was the seemingly massive cultural differences (Coertze, 1983:65). The differences were regarded as irreconcilable, as the two cultures – that of Europeans and that of non-whites – were viewed as being complete opposites, one primitive, the other western (Coertze, 1983:94). Thus, the relationship between Europeans and non-whites was framed in such a way to keep them segregated from the very beginning. The justification for apartheid was ultimately to be found in this ‘ineluctable connection between social group and its culture’ (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:133). It was already in 1943 that Coertze published a report propagating the idea of ‘radical and total apartheid’ (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:125). Coertze’s views were clear and simple. He claimed that

it is in the interests of both the white and non-white population of South Africa that a policy of apartheid should be followed, so that non-white groups [*volks-groepe*] should each have the opportunity to develop, following its own nature and its own *volk* area, so as to achieve eventually full control over its own affairs (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:127).⁴⁶

Volkekunde provided ‘an intellectual formula’ for inter-social relations and ethnic differentiation (Schmidt, 1996:290). The tragedy of *Volkekunde* and those academics that promoted it was that these academics ‘sought to justify their essentially political claims by the fact that they were anthropologists – scientists and so-called experts on “the life of Natives”’ (Hammond-Tooke, 1999:129).

3.2.5 The apartheid ideology

By tracing the development of racial categories in South African society, it becomes clear that there had been a ‘clear-cut racist ideology and attitude of racial superiority’ since the early days of the Dutch settlement (Van der Westhuizen, 2007:16).⁴⁷ But, once the

⁴⁶ These conclusions were based on Coertze’s own ethnos theory, in which he distinguished two types of cultures, a bounded culture or ethnos and a free ethnos. Coertze concluded that individuals from a bounded culture ‘faced great problems when confronted with a free cultural order’, and therefore contact between the two kinds should be avoided – the two were made to function completely separately from each other (Schmidt, 1996:288). Thus, to preserve the open ethnos it would be necessary and justifiable to implement apartheid (Schmidt, 1996:288-289).

⁴⁷ According to Bickford-Smith (1992:47) ‘[d]e facto segregation, in the sense of separation between white and black in institutions such as churches and government undenominational schools had existed in the

National Party (NP) came to power in 1948 and apartheid became a legalised system, it was clear that, as was the case during the colonial period, ideology proved to be a technique of legitimisation (Manzo and McGowan, 1992:3).

According to Giliomee and Schlemmer (1991:41), ‘the political order which the NP constructed after 1948 was aimed at enhancing Afrikaner nationalism by entrenching white political control’. Apartheid, then, was ‘an operative ideology that spelled out the race relations between whites and other ethnic groups’ (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1991:41). In the South African case there were two major ideological elements, namely whites were superior and blacks were inferior, and whites alone could ensure the cultural and physical survival of their own people. In essence, this was an ‘ideology of domination’ (Manzo and McGowan, 1992:3,7). It was based on, and perpetuated by, the fear that political integration, and a very possible loss of political control for the Afrikaner, would mean the demise of the country and, more importantly, the demise of the Afrikaner (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1991:42). Thus, racial segregation was ‘an ideological justification for political inequality’ (Dubow, 1992:64).

The ideological objective was closely linked with ensuring the economic and political dominance of the white population. As already argued, the ideology of domination was internalised as an objective and rational belief system. In other words, white South Africans were convinced that their physical and cultural survival would be highly questionable under black rule (Manzo and McGowan, 1992:14).⁴⁸ Such uncertainties revealed that the old stereotype of blacks being ‘less civilized, corrupt, unfaithful, disorderly, incompetent, irrational’ etc. was firmly entrenched in the white Afrikaner’s mind (Vestergaard, 2001:30).

Cape Colony from the first half of the nineteenth century’, and the racial other were also denied full rights as citizens. Similar policies of exclusion were employed in the Boer Republics, as the racial other was viewed as an inferior race (Van der Westhuizen, 2007:16).

⁴⁸ This was illustrated by a survey, conducted by Manzo and McGowan (1992:14-17) in the early 1990s, in which it was found that, suppose the country was under black rule, 92% of the Afrikaner elite was convinced that government efficiency would decrease, 73.5% believed corruption would increase, 81.9% believed minority rights would decrease, 72.2% believed crime would increase, 86.9% believed white prosperity would decrease, and 84.6% believed safety and security would decrease.

The ideology of domination succeeded in creating immense fear and uncertainty in the white population, and this made the defence of the apartheid system all the more intense. The actions of Afrikaners in the 20th century speak of immutable insecurities and the pursuit of possible actions that would protect them (De Villiers, 1988:xxiv). They were a group of people greatly unsettled by their minority status. Thus, the segregation of the peoples of South Africa was deemed necessary, for, according to Afrikaners, it was only through apartheid that whites could ‘maintain themselves in a society in which they were outnumbered and in which there existed fundamental differences between white and black’ (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1991:54).

It is quite ironic that South Africa lawfully entrenched the race paradigm just as the rest of the world started to dissociate themselves from it (Boonzaier, 1988:63). While the National Party enforced strict apartheid laws based on race, the United Nations released the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and UNESCO denied the existence of race altogether. It thus comes as no surprise that the apartheid system was constantly under attack by the international community, none more verbal than the United Nations, which criticised the apartheid government for governing its country based on racial myths (Dubow, 1992:235). According to Dubow (1992:235), ‘one of the favoured responses was the disavowal of any connection between apartheid and notions of innate racial superiority’. Both Seekings (2008)⁴⁹ and Posel (2010)⁵⁰ would argue that such a defence was not completely unfounded. Indeed, for the South African government, class and social standing were all-important indicators of race. In 1950, the Minister of the Interior stated outright that racial classification ‘was judgment of social status’ (Posel, 2010:168).

⁴⁹ Seekings (2008) argues that although race and racial segregation was an immensely important part of apartheid South Africa, determining race under the apartheid government was based on a number of factors, including descent, language, culture and appearance. However, marks of appearance, such as skin colour or hair, ‘were used inconsistently’, thus another important marker, namely social standing or class, became an all important determining factor of racial categorization (Seekings, 2008:23).

⁵⁰ Posel (2010) elaborates on this point. She argues that the biological categorisation of race was impractical and time consuming (Posel, 2010:165). According to Posel (2010:165), ‘what was required were on-the-spot decisions about a person’s race, drawing on information readily at hand’. Therefore, how people looked and lived often took precedence in race determination. Thus, ‘racial biologies were naturally associated with different ways and standards of living’ (Posel, 2010:165). While being white was associated with economic prosperity and cultural superiority, being black would signify the exact opposite. Indeed, bodily differences became ‘inseparable from judgments about socio-economic status and culture’ (Posel, 2010:165).

However, there certainly remained a biological aspect to race in South Africa, even though it was aided by issues of class.

3.3 The end of apartheid: Entering the new frontier

Garner (2007:59) argues that being white comes with ‘a belief that one is part of a tradition of dominance’. In South Africa, this belief was firmly entrenched in the white population. They ruled the country because they were entitled to political dominance in order to protect their minority status. They ruled it because, in their eyes, no one else would be able to rule it as efficiently as they were able to. However, with a country slowly spiralling out of control and international pressure increasing, the apartheid government found itself with its back against the wall and badly in need of a solution. A whites-only referendum in 1992 established that the National Party should engage in negotiations with black people. But the entire negotiation process, and its subsequent outcome, seemed to have come as an unwanted surprise. According to Jansen (2009:46), ‘nobody expect[ed] that the negotiations will, in the end, be the simple handover of power to a black majority’.

The demise of apartheid came relatively abruptly. By the end of the negotiations, which took place from 1991 to 1993, it was established that the very first democratic election, based on the premise of ‘one person, one vote’, would be held in 1994. It soon became clear that De Klerk⁵¹ was considered by many of his white supporters to be a sell-out who ‘misled those whites who voted “yes” in the 1992 referendum’ by finally surrendering Afrikaner self-determination (Van der Westhuizen, 2007:171-173).⁵² The transition of power occurred within a much shorter time than white South Africans expected. In the words of Jansen (2009:27), once power changed hands ‘it [came] as a huge shock to ordinary white citizens’. The probable reason for such a shock was that these white citizens expected much more from their leaders in the negotiation phase. They expected their leaders not to give up too much in terms of ‘economic privileges, land and language

⁵¹ F.W. De Klerk, leader of the National Party (1989-1997) and the last president of apartheid South Africa (1989-1994), was a key figure in initiating and leading negotiations with the ANC between 1990 and 1994 (Van der Westhuizen, 2007:171).

⁵² According to Puttergill (2008:131), the National Party was ‘outmaneuvered on key issues’. This alludes to the fact that many regarded negotiations to have ended in defeat and embarrassment for the National Party.

rights, and educational and cultural preservations' (Jansen, 2009:27). Rather, at the end of it all, there was a feeling amongst many white Afrikaners that they had been betrayed by their political party, that their leaders had sold them out (Jansen, 2009:27).

The end of apartheid signified the end of an era for Afrikaners. In essence, the proportion of their defeat was the surprising part. Suddenly, Afrikaners were troubled with fear and uncertainty pertaining to their identity and the continued existence of their language and institutions (Jansen, 2009:47). It did not take long for the newly elected black government to consolidate power and for white power to come to an official and abrupt end in the political sphere (Jansen, 2009:28). Along with the loss of political power came another loss. Afrikaners gradually faced the visible loss of old monuments, national holidays celebrating Afrikaner triumphs, and street and town names. Talk of land reform had been on the table since the early 1990s and affirmative action and black economic empowerment seemed to be the order of the day. There was no question that black people were now firmly in control of the former apartheid state (Jansen, 2009:28). While some Afrikaners felt that they had been left on the periphery, watching in utter defeat, others wilfully disengaged from the new South Africa (Jansen, 2009:29).

South Africa is one of the very few cases where a definitive turning point in the country's history can be identified. The 1994 election stands as a clear divide between past and present. In a number of interviews conducted by Steyn (2001:70) it became clear that her respondents viewed the day of the first democratic election in 1994, and the subsequent shift of power to black people, as a turning point – a moment when the lives of Afrikaners changed forever. According to her respondents, this was the moment the oppressor became the oppressed. Indeed, the change was not only sudden, but also extreme (Steyn, 2001:70). The once oppressive government was replaced by a power-sharing government with visions of broad-based reconciliation and an overarching rainbow nation. A democratic government characterised by equal rights and peaceful coexistence amongst its peoples was now broadly accepted (Moodley and Adam, 2000:1). Or was it?

3.3.1 The road to Damascus?

Much has been said about De Klerk's sudden shift from National Party leader to dismantler of apartheid. It becomes quite clear that this shift did not happen because he had a sudden and fundamental change of heart. He simply realised that maintaining a white minority government could only be achieved through 'increas[ed] state violence, amid economic meltdown' (Van der Westhuizen, 2007:176-177). According to Van der Westhuizen (2007:176), De Klerk 'opted for pragmatism'. It could well be said that, overall, the whites of South Africa experienced the same feeling. They did not all have an immediate change of heart concerning the worthiness of 'the racially other'. With the history of this country, that would be almost impossible. In this case it would be useful to pose the question that Johnson (1961:101) posed regarding the American case: '[t]o what extent will the change in the formal legal norms bring about change in the social norms and values of the dominant white group?' In other words, will a change in legal norms translate into a visible change in the structural relationship between those previously segregated by law? In 1991, most of South Africa's racially based laws were abolished, which meant that 'racism in South Africa was officially deinstitutionalized' (James and Lever, 2001:50). However, 'the many decades of apartheid had seriously impaired the ability to cross racial barriers' (Schutte, 1995:330).

The South African case illustrated that the antagonisms of the past, along with centuries of race-based thinking and legal segregation, were not soon to be forgotten. It was soon discovered that a deeply racialised society would not transform itself in the course of three short days in April 1994, or even the years that followed. Although legal racism was now something of the past, 'attitudes cannot be legislated' (Moodley and Adam, 2000:5). Proving this point, Schutte (1995:80) concluded in his research that 'the effects of apartheid legislation have crystallized in physical structures, geographic arrangements, and human values to such an extent that they will guide human interaction and pattern social life in South Africa for many years to come'. Apartheid had succeeded in preventing people from '[moving] beyond seeing each other in anonymous and stereotypical terms' (Schutte, 1995:334). In his study, Schutte (1995:229) found that the old stereotypes remained firmly intact. Some of the farmers he spoke to were convinced

that black people could not be trusted to run their own affairs, as they were regarded as barbaric, lazy and inefficient if left to their own devices (Schutte, 1995:229).

These ideas seem to have remained firmly entrenched in the minds of many white people. Racial thinking is evident in most conversations on crime, public service and the government in general (Vestergaard, 2001:30).

Look at the government, it's ridden with corruption. *They* [my italics] are not capable of managing this country. Everything is corrupt and the country is well on its way to become another Zimbabwe (middle-aged male respondent).

The incompetence of blacks to rule the affairs of a country becomes evident in conversations. From corruption to poor service delivery and crime statistics, all is explained simply: 'That's what happens when a bunch of k*ffers rule the country' (male, mid-30s).

Indeed, despite efforts to the contrary, 'South Africa remains thoroughly racialized' and, although some might try to deny it, many South Africans remain thoroughly racist (Vestergaard, 2001:30). Dubow (1992:210) gave a forewarning of such a possibility when he argued that 'notions of superiority, exclusivity and hierarchy have long existed as more or less conscious habits of mind' in South Africa. According to James and Lever (2001:50) there remains 'an ideological consensus on the old ways of racial discrimination' at the public level. With the legacy of apartheid it would be naïve to think that the racism and deep-seated racial tensions of old would disappear (James and Lever, 2001:50).⁵³ Thus, Seekings (2008:2) argues that 'race does indeed remain ever present in contemporary South Africa'. Adam, as cited in Zegeye (2001:14), is in agreement when he argues that 'racism as the everyday false consciousness of socially constructed

⁵³ One has to include that racism in South Africa is not one-sided. Since the end of apartheid about 3000 farmers (most of them classified as Afrikaners) have been murdered on their farms – a statistic that is certainly a sensitive topic for any white farmer and that is usually coupled with high emotions. Add to this the controversy surrounding the singing of 'Kill the boer, kill the farmer' and its connotations with racism and hate speech, and the issue takes on a somewhat more serious tone (The Economist, 2011). It should also be noted here that 'group intolerance is not just a black and white issue' (The Economist, 2008). A recent poll indicated that 42% of black people living in shacks feel threatened by 'the cultural other' due to competition in the labour market – a feeling that has sparked xenophobic attacks on African immigrants – and also that housing shortages in the Western Cape have added to the antagonism of coloured people towards black people (The Economist, 2008). One soon realises that, in South Africa, antagonism runs deep, in all directions, and is found amongst all population groups.

difference has not disappeared with the repeal of racial legislation'. But should this come as a surprise to anyone?

Seekings (2008:2) is of the opinion that, tainted and tarnished by a deeply racialised past, 'it would be astonishing if post-apartheid South African society was not shaped profoundly by the experience of apartheid'. Thus, there remains a 'deep-rooted and enduring consciousness of race' in the country (Seekings, 2008:2). Therefore, 'race retains its central position in identities and culture' in South Africa (Seekings, 2008:8). This was also illustrated by the 2003 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), in which it was found that, although South Africans generally believe that 'race relations have improved since the end of apartheid', the distrust of old seems to have remained mostly intact (Seekings, 2008:9-10). This distrust was evident during tree-trimming season in my research area. During this time, workers are paid per tree and thus the accurate counting of the trimmed trees at the end of each week becomes an important part in determining their weekly pay. It was one Friday around lunch that one of my respondents, a farmer about 50 years of age, stormed into his home, obviously upset.

These workers, they are so sly, they gave me a completely wrong count of the trees they trimmed. Their total comes down to more trees than I have in total in those orchards. Do they think I'm an idiot, that I won't count those trees myself to check on them? You cannot trust them, you just cannot trust them. They'll cheat you every chance they get.

While it is possible to question the relevance of race, rather than class (it being the workers who are referred to from the point of view of the boss) in relation to this comment, it should be borne in mind that the concept of farm worker in my research area is synonymous with coloured or black (as was explained in the first chapter). The colonial idea of the racial other as being deceitful and having thievish values seemed to still be intact in my research area. Another farmer (about 60 years old) also made it clear that his farm workers had to be 'checked up on' – a sure sign of distrust. The same sentiment was found among Goodwin's (1995:61) respondents, when one of them claimed: 'they [the racial other] steal and murder and all that sort of thing' (Goodwin, 1995:61). It was also found in the documentary *The Heart of Whiteness* (2004), when a

white middle-aged woman stated: 'It was always told to us: leave them alone, they are people that break into houses and so on.'

Along with these beliefs is the general belief in the inferiority of the racial other. In his study, Schutte (1995:233) found that, for his respondents, being black 'stood for virtually everything the white is not' – acting as 'a negative mirror image'. While his respondents claimed to have 'in-depth knowledge of blacks, their ways and their character', knowing them, in this sense, meant knowing them to be inferior. In fact, most of Schutte's (1995:291) informants 'believed there was an unbridgeable, or almost unbridgeable, gap in civilization between white and blacks' – seeing blacks as 'not quite human'. The following excerpt from one of my conversations with an older female respondent illuminates the embedded belief of the inferiority of the racial other:

Just the other day we had a get-together for all the [coloured] women working at the old-age home. And would you know it, they arrived dressed so nicely, very fancy. Not old-fashioned at all. We used to think that they don't need fancy get-togethers and dinners. It just goes to show, you sometimes forget that they are just people like us.

This woman was somewhat surprised by her own realisation that coloured people were 'just people like us'. This illuminated the fact that, even in a post-apartheid context, my research subjects still struggled to find the commonalities between themselves and the racial other on the most basic and primary level – that of shared humanity.

According to Manzo and McGowan (1992:7), many Afrikaners remain convinced that '[m]ost blacks in South Africa have not reached the same level of development as the white man'. Goodwin (1995:61) arrived at a similar conclusion, finding that thinking along the lines of the levels of civilisation has remained with the Afrikaner when talking about their racial counterparts.⁵⁴ This often results in a general view of inherent and unbridgeable differences between the racial categories. This was illustrated by Schutte (1995:233), who found that some of his respondents 'could see virtually no common

⁵⁴ When speaking of black workers, one of Goodwin's (1995:61) respondents claimed that 'they're [the racial other] not on the same level of civilization as our white people'.

humanity shared between themselves and the blacks'. According to Schutte (1995:230), in such cases the blatant racism of his white respondents 'could not be disguised'.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the development of racial categories in South Africa and, more importantly, that this process was accompanied by the belief that these categories were inherently different from each other, each to be kept separate at all times. A long history of racial segregation, reaching its peak with the Apartheid state and the complete legal segregation of all created racial categories in South Africa, contributed to a slow erosion of outdated ideas of race and racial categories in post-apartheid South Africa. While the country did embrace a political transition, the 1994 democratic elections brought no 'road to Damascus' for the citizens of South Africa. Due partly to a failure of economic transition and the consequent continuing close correlation of race and class within South African society, also not to underestimate the incredible impact of a racially discriminating past within all sectors of society, it was found that, in the minds of my research subjects, this society is still constructed according to a racial hierarchy in which whites assume the top position. Along with such an assumption comes the belief that, if whites assume the top position, all other racial categories fall below them, in essence making these categories something less.

The racial segregation of apartheid, coupled with the so-called academic and scientific justification of this segregation, was successful in convincing the people of South Africa that they were in fact inherently different. A post-election survey conducted in 1994 found that 'more than 64% of the respondents indicated that they belonged to a distinct community, in terms of culture, history and language' (Kotze, 1997:7). In a survey conducted in 1996 it was found that self-definitions were generally based on race (35.7% of the respondents defined themselves according to their race) and culture (38% of the respondents defined themselves according to their culture) (Kotze, 1997:8). According to Zegeye (2001:14), the study showed 'a strong sense of group identification in South Africa, with the overwhelming majority of respondents attaching great political significance to their primary identity'. Apartheid, with the support of *Volkekunde*, successfully 'entrenched racialized identities and fostered racial division' (Seekings,

2008:5). In the words of Adam, as cited in Zegeye (2001:13), ‘Apartheid had institutionalized group differences’.

Almost two decades after the first democratic election, and the subsequent political transition, we find that race still informs identity in South Africa to a large extent, and that society is still constructed as a racial hierarchy. In the rural community of farmers that is my research area, racial categories are generally determining factors of what job you do, where you live, where you shop, and who you socialise with, resulting in visible racial separateness. While no legal framework exists anymore to enforce such separateness, I found that this separateness was now enforced by clear, and generally accepted, social boundaries. The continuities of an apartheid past, that offers testament to the lack of a social transition in South Africa, are evident in the exertion of social boundaries within my research area. A deeper investigation into these boundaries seemed necessary.

CHAPTER 4

BOUNDARIES AND BOUNDARY WORK: MAINTAINING THE RACIAL DIVIDE

‘...and to them it may be desirable to point to a landmark, either natural or artificial, and to say: “You may not pass that mark”’ (Holdich, 1916:194)

4.1 Introduction

Boundaries⁵⁵ seem to have always been a key part of South African society, both in terms of creating and perpetuating the racial divide. Vestergaard (2001:21) is of the opinion that ‘generations of Afrikaners grew up in a social space where boundaries were sharply drawn’. On 21 May 1971, President J.J. Fouché spoke at the opening function of the Anniversary Celebration of the Republic of South Africa. He declared that, in the decision-making and the development of the country, the National Party had followed the advice of the greatest thinker of all time, Solomon, who proclaimed: ‘may we not cross the boundaries created by our fathers’ (Burger, 1975:73).⁵⁶

According to Fuller (2003:4), ‘the degree to which the boundaries that ultimately prevail can be understood [is] in the context of prior boundaries through and against which they were created’. Miller (2001:25) argues that boundaries ‘are drawn in specific social and historical circumstances’. They are ‘the fruits of contingency and political constraint’ (Miller, 2001:25-26). Therefore, some boundaries will remain ‘because of the nature of the social structural arena in which they are constructed’ (Fuller, 2003:5). For, as is the case with ideologies, and boundaries certainly are informed by certain ideologies, it is ‘common to portray the boundaries one favors as the only proper and logical option’ (Fuller, 2003:5). The existence of boundaries thus becomes political, acting as ‘a demarcation of difference that helps define and code what is “same” and what is “other”’ (Valins, 2003:171). This correlates with the definition provided by Migdal (2004:5), who

⁵⁵ Boundary will be used as Zaman (2001) uses the term. He argues that ‘[t]he term boundary refers to any or all of the following: “border,” “limit,” “bound,” “confine,” “end,” and “frontier”’ (Zaman, 2001:184).

⁵⁶ In this case, Fouché was specifically referring to the boundaries drawn between the racial categories of the country.

argues that boundaries ‘signify the point at which something becomes something else, at which the way things are done changes, at which “we” end and “they” begin’. A boundary thus acts as a dividing line that cuts between groups of people, so that ‘they recognize themselves, and are recognized by others’ (Miller and Hashmi, 2001:3). It includes ‘symbolic and social dimensions associated with the border division’ (Migdal, 2004:5-6). A social boundary is thus an efficient way to create or confirm the very powerful duality of ‘us’ and ‘others’ or, as Tajfel (1978:426) refers to it, the in-group and the opposing out-group.⁵⁷ In short, it could be argued that a boundary limits the individual or group in that it sets the limits within which movements and actions can occur. It is a ‘strict line of separation’ (Lamont and Molnar, 2002:168), often revealed ‘in stable behavioral patterns of association’ (Mountz, 2009:201).

Valins (2003:160) argues that boundaries ‘are not just temporary acts of resistance, but rather revolve around more stubborn incommensurable elements that refuse (or are unable) to melt in the heat of a post-modern world’. The drawing of boundaries, the limits imposed on the collective, is a method employed by humans ‘to secure the social and spatial lines that are crucial to how people make sense of, and practice, their everyday lives’ (Valins, 2003:172). Boundaries are created in defence of a specific group identity. For Massey (1994:5), the establishment of boundaries as a way to secure identity also acts as an ‘attempt to stabilize the meaning of particular envelopes of space-time’. It would be an attempt to freeze the space-time continuum in a social sense – to guard against a renegotiation of existing boundaries which would in effect mean a renegotiation of the collective identity.

In my research area, the collective refers to a very specific community – one centred around the local Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)⁵⁸, comprising an all-white, Afrikaans-

⁵⁷ To conceptualise in-group it is best to use the definition provided by Allport (1954). Although he admits to the fact that defining an in-group precisely is difficult, he states that ‘members of an in-group all use the term *we* with the same essential significance’ (Allport, 1954:31). In contrast, the out-group is all of those who are not classified as being part of the in-group. Thus, when the in-group is formed it is formed relative to another group or in opposition to another group.

⁵⁸ Jansen (2008) regards the church as one of the most important agents of socialisation. His claim is definitely not unfounded, for the DRC played a tremendous part in justifying the segregationist policies of apartheid rule. Stated more plainly, the DRC socialised its members to believe that it was God’s will for the

speaking audience. Holdich (1916:13) defined a community as having ‘common characteristics and similar ambitions’. For Berns (2007 [1997]:401), community can be defined as ‘a group of people sharing fellowship, a friendly association and common interest’, the crucial component being ‘the relationship of people to one another and the sense of belonging and of obligation to the group’. Community is used here, as it has been used in South Africa and elsewhere, ‘to denote aggregations of people who have something in common, such as common residence, geographic region, and shared beliefs, or who claim membership in a common lineage structure, or who are distinguished by similarities of economic activity or class position’ (Thornton and Ramphela, 1988:30). Along with identifying such a community I have to admit that the use of such a term ‘does not guarantee that a “community” actually exists: there may in fact be no audience, no willingness to cooperate, no coherent social organization, no sense of belonging’ (Thornton and Ramphela, 1988:30). But communities do exist as far as belief and practice go, and are founded on the social interaction of their members, ‘which inevitably produces social boundaries’ (Thornton and Ramphela, 1988:38). According to Thornton and Ramphela (1988:37-38), ‘the churches in South Africa provide an institutional support for well-established communities which are bound together by shared beliefs’. Such a community is also ‘reinforced by a system of rules and regulations that binds the participants together in pursuit of the common good’ (Thornton and Ramphela, 1988:38). Specifically on the basis of DRC membership, I found that my research subjects constituted a somewhat close-knit community, or they considered themselves to be such a community.⁵⁹

In a post-apartheid context, I found many of the racial boundaries of old still intact, specifically in my research area. While the laws of apartheid were legally demolished almost two decades ago, here I find its mostly uninterrupted remnants alive and well. As I

racess to be kept separate in order to be protected from each other – in order to be kept pure in both the biological and cultural sense.

⁵⁹ The idea of group membership, or collective identity, deserves some attention. While it informs a sense of belonging, collective identity also includes ‘a crucial temporal dimension – some version or multiple versions of communal history or “collective memory”’ (Maier, 2007:67-68). This resonates with the idea of imagined communities as explored by Anderson (2006 [1983]) – a theme that has been discussed earlier. Anderson (2006 [1983]) draws on many forms of collective experience to explain how imagined communities are formed. For him, nations become imagined and modelled through ‘social change and different forms of consciousness’ (Anderson, 2006 [1983]:141).

drive down the main road of Farmville I can clearly identify which areas of the commercial district are favoured by whites and which are favoured by blacks and coloureds. To the naked eye, these areas may still look as if they are legally segregated, as they mainly represent reserved spaces for the different races. Interaction between the different racial categories, it seemed to me, was based mostly on a professional level of the class structure: farmer and farm worker; housewife and domestic worker; customer and cashier; customer and waiter. Upon observation, these interactions hardly seemed strained or generally demeaning. They were often goodhearted exchanges, maybe even coupled with a 'how are you?' But, in general, these exchanges were businesslike and to the point. These interactions generally failed to translate into the broader social sphere of the community. Here, interracial dinner parties or afternoon teas were not likely to be found; they are rare to the point of non-existence. However uninteresting the general lack of racial interaction in a social sense may have appeared, the absence of interaction was to spark a change of direction in my research. It became clear that the racial boundaries of old were kept firmly intact in my research area by all racial categories, and the existence of these boundaries were key in illustrating the continuities of apartheid South Africa in a post-apartheid context.

While I conducted my fieldwork, I attended church services at the local DRC, specifically because of the history of this church in apartheid South Africa, its constituency (white, Afrikaans speakers), and the way it resembled this particular collective as a community. It was here that the issue of racial boundaries was illuminated to me by none other than the preacher himself (a man in his late forties who entered this community about eight years ago). In a series of sermons, this preacher addressed the issue of boundaries. Throughout this series of sermons there was a display in the front of the church – a designated area surrounded by wires intertwined with a string of small bright lights and a closed gate. The wires and closed gate indicated a clear-cut boundary between the designated area and the surrounding space.

Although the theme of these sermons was directed towards boundaries in general, one focal issue came up in every sermon, namely that of race. This preacher was under no illusions regarding the views of his members (a large part of the constituency being

farmers from the surrounding area) and the struggle they had with race. The preacher became a key respondent in my research. The following quote was taken from the first sermon of the series and speaks volumes regarding the racial boundaries in my research area:

We are sometimes just too safe in our little camps, our designated areas. I operate the way in which I am used to, it's a habit. Habits are a form of boundaries ... safe boundaries. But boundaries need to be moved ... We think of habits as something that is naturally ingrained in us. It's not. All of us, or many of the older people sitting here, grew up during apartheid. We inherited many habits as children – how to think of the racial “other” and to think of them as being inferior. Most of us grew up with this idea. To now distance ourselves from this idea is a process. You think it's in our blood, that you didn't choose it, that you received the ability to look at someone and have certain perceptions about them based on visible physical characteristics ... We have to sometimes push against our boundaries. Sometimes it's hard, for some of these boundaries are made of steel ... Is there racism? That which you just can't get past, that God loves that person just as much as He loves you. This you are aware of in church and you maybe believe it when the preacher says it, but in your heart you call him the k-word or the h-word. You need to bring that to God (Preacher).

I found that this community was governed by clearly demarcated social boundaries regarding the racial other – or out-group. The preacher seemed to be under no illusion regarding the very same fact. He had clearly identified his community's struggle to engage with the racial other as equals. Not only had he identified the issue, he was trying to address it in various ways; he was trying to facilitate a movement of the racial boundaries. But he was fully aware of the difficulties in doing so. ‘Nowhere is it easy to change the system, most of the time it stays as it is ... There's a resistance: “I don't want to be hassled with the race issue”’ (Preacher). I realised that this preacher had a tremendous task on his hands if he wanted to challenge the existing racial boundaries in his community.

The central theme of this chapter will be that of boundaries; in my case, specifically social boundaries. For a coherent definition of this concept I will draw on the fields of Anthropology, Sociology and Psychology, where boundaries are employed to investigate ‘the limits of social behavior that are often used to differentiate groups to which we belong from those to which we do not’ (Postmes et al, 1998:690). I will also draw on the field of Political Science, in which boundaries are used to refer to the demarcation of states – where these boundaries are used as geographical markers to distinguish one state from another. In a similar vein, social boundaries are drawn around perceived social differences within communities and, in my case, to distinguish one racial group from another (Postmes et al, 1998:690). Boundaries thus involve ‘relations of exclusion and inclusion’ (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1994:7). According to Holdich (1916:2), ‘[b]oundaries ... are human inventions not necessarily supported by nature’s dispositions’. Thus, boundaries are viewed as social constructions - ‘a framework through which [to] interpret the world’, as well as the ‘basis for interaction and social organization’ (Fuller, 2003:3). Standing as the divide between the in- and out-group, boundaries also generally signify where one should go in order to be in place, or where one should not go as this will be regarded as being out of place.

4.2 Who belongs where? Being in place and out of place

Cresswell (2004:102) is of the opinion that place, spatial location and the arrangement thereof carry significant meaning in society. ‘There is, we are told, a place for everything and everything in its place’ (Cresswell, 2004:102).

Shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining table; food is not dirty in itself, but it is dirty to leave cooking utensils in the bedroom, or food bespattered on clothing, similarly, bathroom equipment in the drawing room; clothes lying on chairs (Douglas, 1966:36).

According to Cresswell (2004:102-103), such a use of the concept ‘suggests a tight connection between geographical place and assumptions about normative behavior’. During my observations I quickly realised that the spatial arrangements of my research area were, to a very large extent, based on racial categories and, more specifically, the separation thereof (something I suspect was inherited from the apartheid era). The result was that the spatial location and movement of the individual became linked to the point

where the individual is bound to a specific location in order to be ‘in-place’ – a term that is, for Valins (2003:169), synonymous with defining a certain physical space as being ‘your’ place. ‘Your’ space becomes all the more evident for not being someone else’s place – a space where the ‘you’ would be considered to be out of place. Being out of place thus refers to a noticeable inability to fit in – or, in my case, a possible transgression of some sort.

Thus, we find that people and/or practices can be either ‘in-place’ or ‘out-of-place’ (Cresswell, 2004:103). Any judgment of being ‘out-of-place’ would imply a transgression of some sort – a line that has been crossed. According to Cresswell (2004:103), although such a transgression may or may not have been intended by the perpetrator, ‘[w]hat matters is that the action is seen as transgression by someone who is disturbed by it’. This disturbance is mostly brought on by the fact that being “out-of-place” or, more importantly, being *caught* “out-of-place”, becomes synonymous with pollution and dirt (defined by anthropologist Mary Douglas as ‘matter out-of-place’) and ‘a threat to good order, and so are regarded as objectionable’ (Douglas, 1966:160).

It becomes clear that one is judged for being in- or out-of-place based on ‘a pre-exist[ing] classification system of some kind’ (Cresswell, 2004:103). The construction of places ‘forms the basis for the possibility of transgression or, in Douglas’s terms, pollution’ (Cresswell, 2004:103). The creation of norms based on specific beliefs, and usually legitimised by institutions, plays an important role in establishing a “moral code” – used to determine adherence or transgression. An ideal order of society is created through exerting this “moral code”, one that, if transgressed in any way, will face dangerous consequences. This ideal order is thus kept in place through fear of transgression and the dangers associated with it. But transgressions are not only thought to affect the individual; there is also the effect of sinfulness or immorality. For lack of being able to state it better, I choose to quote Douglas (1966:3) at length:

The whole universe is harnessed to men’s attempts to force one another into good citizenship. Thus we find that certain moral values are upheld and certain social rules defined by beliefs in dangerous contagion, as when the glance or touch of an adulterer is held to bring illness to his neighbours or his children.

Douglas (1966:3) argues that ‘some pollutions are used as analogies for expressing a general view of the social order’.⁶⁰ If this is the case, it is easy to observe that the social order in my research area is still based on strict racial separation and that the social order is, indeed, rather a racial order. Therefore, Douglas (1966:41) also argues that ‘the only way in which pollution ideas make sense is in reference to a total structure of thought whose key-stone, boundaries, margins and internal lines are held in relation by rituals of separation’. The rituals of separation in my research area became quite clear to me during my fieldwork. As has been argued earlier, the legal structures of separation managed to outlive their legal demise. Old ideas regarding “in-place” and “out-of-place” seem to have remained unchanged. This can be witnessed in the absence of black and/or coloured homeowners in the historically white neighbourhoods – neighbourhoods that have largely remained strictly separated in terms of race. It can be witnessed on the street: in terms of who can be found where. It can be witnessed in the everyday economy: who buys what and where. It can also be witnessed in the absence of inter-racial couples. The latter specifically seems to still be ridden with ideas of dirt and pollution – a matter completely out-of-place. But, according to Suttles (1972:156), ‘since society is at least partially constituted by norms and standards, compliance with these norms and standards is at least partially voluntaristic’.

4.3 Crossing boundaries

For Fuller (2003:5), social boundaries are emergent, ‘they shift and change as people interpret and rework a variety of meanings in response to both events and to one another’. Thus, boundaries ‘are often a key site for struggles over social relations’ (Fuller, 2003:4). Due to the fact that conformity to established norms is voluntary, ‘the prospect of deviance is always possible in human societies’ (Suttles, 1972:156). For Holdich (1916), the problem was evident when he spoke of political and territorial boundaries in Africa. He argued that

nature abhors a straight line, and nature will have no hand in presenting opportunity for a useful and easily demarcated boundary, that is absolutely straight. Nothing but

⁶⁰ Goffman (1963:8) defines a social order as ‘the consequence of any set of moral norms that regulates the way in which persons pursue objectives’.

the necessity imposed by ignorance can justify the adoption of the straight line. It is inelastic, allowing none of that give and take ... (Holdich, 1916:169-179).

Translated into the social sense of boundaries, the problem is identified as that of inelasticity – the absence of a give-and-take dynamic. According to Douglas (1966:163), '[w]hen a strict pattern of purity is imposed on our lives ... it leads into contradiction if closely followed, or it leads to hypocrisy'. Indeed, 'nature abhors a straight line'. As I was about to discover, rigid boundaries will be crossed, but not in the absence of judgment from fellow community members. It is exactly when contradictions and vulnerabilities arise that one must conclude that 'at certain points the system seems to be at war with itself'. Thus, as will be illustrated, '[a]ny structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins' (Douglas, 1966:121).

4.3.1 Crossing boundaries: Sexual transgressions

Davies (1982:1032) is of the opinion that strong sexual taboos are 'the result of attempts to establish and defend strong ethnic, religious, or institutional boundaries'. Any transgressions will be 'interpreted by the societies concerned as "injurious to the whole community"' – an idea that resonates with Douglas's (1966:3) 'dangerous contagion' regarding dirt and pollution. Thus, Davies (1982:1033) argues that sexual taboos signify an attempt to reinforce and maintain boundaries in order to 'retain [a] distinctive identity under adverse circumstance'. Douglas (1966:157) is of the opinion that pollution 'seems to cluster round contradictions which ... involve sex'. This was also the case in my research area, where sexual transgressions revealed the somewhat hidden contradictions of the social order and the boundaries that accompanied it. As Douglas (1966:140) argues, 'instead of dependence and harmony, sexual institutions express rigid separation and violent antagonisms'. Within my research area, these rigid separations of who you are allowed to have sex with and who not are determined by strict racial boundaries.

It was argued that the degree to which boundaries prevail 'can only be understood in the context of prior boundaries through and against which they were created' (Fuller, 2003:4). In other words, existing boundaries do not stand in isolation from historical circumstances, something that, in truth, needs no reminder. As argued earlier, 'exact lines are drawn in specific social and historical circumstances' (Miller, 2001:25). Some of the

very first laws implemented by the apartheid government were the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Amendment Act (1950) – both drawing clear legal boundaries with regard to sexual interaction of any nature between whites and the racial other, with transgressions being punishable by law. For Davies (1982:1042), such drastic attempts to limit sexual contact signify ‘attempts of powerful or influential groups to define and defend important social boundaries which they feel are being threatened’. According to Davies (1982:1042), and in my own opinion this was the case with the apartheid government, ‘[u]nder these circumstances the forms of sexual behavior seen as breaking the boundaries of “natural” categories [in this case racial categories] tend to become the special subject of persecution’. As will be illustrated below, the borders created by our fathers seem to have remained intact for the most part in my research area.

During my fieldwork I encountered no mixed couples of any kind, and I only encountered stories about inter-racial dating and the one racially mixed couple in town. It seemed that, in my study area, such instances were extremely rare and some part of me soon realised why. As already mentioned, I can only recount the stories told by my respondents on this issue, as in practice instances of inter-racial dating or marriage were just too rare to observe myself. It was only later in my fieldwork that I felt comfortable enough to enquire about the absence of racially mixed couples. My first enquiries did not result in much more than brief answers such as ‘no, there are no such couples’ to ‘not really’ or ‘we are very conservative in that regard’. One male respondent (in his late forties) was quite adamant on this issue and explained that ‘you never see one kind of bird breed with another kind of bird, they stick to their kind’. This answer clearly illustrated a somewhat general sentiment regarding the issue, as well as the strictly demarcated racial boundaries found in my research area. Finally, I was told the following story by a female respondent:

One night, this was about two years ago, we were at Cheers*, that pub in the main street. It’s only a restaurant now, it’s not a pub anymore. [This particular pub, which had in the meantime closed its doors and was replaced by a restaurant with a new name, could be seen just as you were driving out of town. Where the main street acted as a clear boundary between the white neighbourhood on one side and the black and coloured neighbourhoods on the other, this restaurant was situated on

the “white” side of the street, right across from a black neighbourhood. Interestingly enough, when I visited this restaurant I found it to be the playground of an exclusively white audience, even though it was so close to the black and coloured neighbourhoods.] We were at the pub and the bartender, who was white, was dating one of the waitresses of the restaurant – a coloured girl. Some people were aware of this, but we didn’t say anything about it. But then this one guy who was there with a group of friends, he was 22 years old then, was ordering a drink at the bar and to get the attention of the bartender he called out: “Hey you, meidenaaier!” [a derogatory term for someone who has sex with a coloured woman]. The bartender heard him and jumped over the counter and started beating this guy. The owner of this pub [also a young white male of about 30] managed to break up the fight and then asked the bartender to leave. The other guy was left to carry on drinking as usual. I never saw the bartender there again (Female, 24).

The very telling part of this story is the social complications involved in crossing the fixed racial boundaries with regard to dating, even amongst a generation presumably not directly tied to apartheid, a generation that, one would think, was not bound by the shackles of racial discrimination. Yet there seems to be a general understanding amongst this generation of young whites that, in terms of dating and marrying, one has to ‘stick to one’s own kind’. Although this is only one story, it signifies the social unacceptability of mixed couples in this town. Both of these males were, at the time, in their early twenties. While one of them crossed the racial boundary to become involved with a coloured girl, the other voiced his disapproval of such boundary crossing. In this sense, the white bartender had transgressed the ‘moral code’ and had to face the consequences.

I also experienced the complete taboo of inter-racial attraction firsthand. I had the good fortune to accompany some locals on an adventurous outing in the mountains. With two instructors leading the way – and may I add only for the sake of the argument that these instructors were two coloured males – we headed into the mountains. Afterwards, when I told one of my female respondents about the outing I left out the fact that the instructors were coloured. I simply spoke about the two male instructors, upon which my respondent asked whether the instructors were cute. Before I could reply, the question was retracted

and almost interrupted by another: ‘Wait, were they white?’ When I replied in the negative to the initial question, ‘were they cute?’ was not repeated. Instead, this part of the conversation was concluded with a simple ‘oh’. With the knowledge I had already gained in the field regarding inter-racial dating, I realised that, because I was white and the instructors were coloured, my respondent did not even entertain the thought of me, a white female, finding a coloured man attractive. This would signify a transgression of the norm in my research area.

The general disapproval and unacceptability of mixed couples is visible. For, as one of my older female respondents claimed, ‘If you marry one of them then you become just like them’ – thus becoming injurious to the whole white community. Such a transgression would be coupled with the type of contagion that would defile an entire community. This was also evident in the following comment:

God had intended that all people have to stick to their own people. He chased Abraham’s Muslim wife into the desert. God did that. But these days ... [shakes her head] there will be nothing left of the Afrikaner. It will become a *mengelmoes* [hodgepodge or mixture]. I hope I don’t live to see that day (Female respondent, early 60s).

My own findings correspond to those in the documentary *The Heart of Whiteness* (2004), a documentary investigating whites in rural communities from the Free State to Orania, where a respondent claimed that he would never date someone from another race as the community would not accept it, and most of all, his mother would not accept it because she ‘didn’t raise [him] like that’. In the same documentary, a woman was asked what she would do if her granddaughter brought home a coloured boyfriend. Her response: ‘I hope I die before that happens’ (*The Heart of Whiteness*, 2004). The presenter of this documentary landed himself in hot water when he asked a young white farmer from a small town in the Free State whether he had a black girlfriend. ‘Are you mad?!’ This question almost led to a physical altercation and another young farmer had to step in. He explained it as follows: ‘You come here all the way from f***-ing Jo’burg and you ask a farmer if he’s got a black girlfriend! That’s not right bru.’ The correspondence between my own findings and those in *The Heart of Whiteness* (2004) alludes to the fact that, in

small [white] farmer communities, the boundaries of interracial dating are fixed, with little chance of being breached. For most white people in my research area, such interracial transgressions remain associated with dirt and pollution – put more simply, a matter out of place.

In my research area, as in the small farmer communities investigated in *The Heart of Whiteness*, it is mostly accepted, or rather expected, that each racial group will indeed ‘stick to their own kind’. According to my subjects, the differences between these supposed racial groups are immutable to the point where attraction across these lines is simply out of the question. The racial/sexual boundaries will simply not allow such a thing. Or will it? Nowhere in my research area did I come across a mixed couple. I only heard the stories and they were very few. But, from spending time in my research area and spending time with my research subjects, a few hints were dropped that the crossing of sexual racial boundaries was not unheard of. In South Africa, and also in my research area specifically, the contradictions between past and present, apartheid and post-apartheid, manifests themselves almost daily in boundary construction and reconstruction, in boundary conformity and non-conformity. The clashes between past and present, between legal prohibitions to engage in any sexual acts with the racial other as opposed to having the legal freedom to do so now, become evident. Yet it can be argued that, although no legal prohibitions remain, they have been replaced with social prohibitions regarding such transgressions. As Douglas (1966:159) argues, ‘powers are attributed to any structure of ideas, and rules of avoidance make a visible public recognition of its boundaries’. This leaves many people caught in between. But, in the words of Holdich (1916:4), ‘the world is full of boundaries, but there are men still who have but little respect for them’. And between having sexual relations with the racial other and not having sexual relations lies the answer: having these sexual relations in secret.

‘Let me tell you, if the sun should rise in the middle of the night, you’ll see how many bakkies [pick-up trucks, a vehicle favoured by farmers] drive out of the informal settlement’ (Male respondent, 25). This comment by one of my younger male respondents intrigued me, for what once seemed to be strict and adhered to racial/sexual

boundaries now came under question. Before delving into this issue, it would be wise to do a brief analysis of the above comment. First it should be noted that the “bakkie” [pick-up] is a vehicle commonly driven by white farmers in the area, thus this comment quite clearly alludes to the fact that it is white farmers who visit informal settlements at night for sexual pleasure. This brings us to the second important point, that these visits happen at night, in secrecy. The racial/sexual boundaries are thus being crossed, but since it happens in secret it points to the fact that these boundaries are not being moved. Although such knowledge of boundary crossing exists, it is not something which is admitted to by the perpetrators or often spoken about by others. However, subtle references to it can be noticed in certain circumstances.

There is one situation I recall simply because, to some extent, it confirmed these widespread suspicions of clandestine interracial sexual relations. It happened at a year-end function for the farm workers on one of the farms on which I conducted research. The function took place on a Saturday, starting at noon (starting early in order to finish early because ‘they [the workers] get too drunk if it goes on for too long’). The workers, along with their spouses and children, as well as the owner of the farm, a man in his late 50s, were all present at the function. The farmer spent most of his time outside of the building where the main proceedings took place (away from all the workers, who only now and then came closer to speak to him). Meanwhile the children of the workers were also playing outside in and around the sheds. From where he stood, the farmer noticed a small boy. Upon following his gaze I saw a boy of about four years old with a very light toned skin and, as the sun broke through the trees, a slight reddish glow noticeable in his hair. The farmer called this boy over: ‘Hey, come here.’ The small boy was somewhat reluctant to approach the farmer but did proceed slowly towards him. With his eyes on the ground and his hands clasped behind his back he came to a standstill in front of the farmer. ‘What’s your name?’ asked the farmer. The boy answered softly, so softly in fact that from where I was standing I could not hear him. ‘What?’ said the farmer. Again a soft mumbling. Personally I did not believe this to be mere shyness, but rather that this man, this farmer, a white male in his late fifties, was truly a terrifying figure to this little coloured boy. But it was the next question that really caught my attention and made me take notice: ‘Who’s your father?’ asked the farmer with a slight hint of a hidden smile

crossing his face. It all fell into place for me. These farmers were very much aware of indecent and secretive meetings with coloured women; they just did not talk about it openly. I was to learn of it from a younger male who is not a farmer himself but has a lot of contact with the farmers of the area. The question, ‘who’s your father?’, was riddled with implied meaning. ‘Is your father white?’ was the real issue here. Indeed, the neatly drawn racial boundaries that seemed to be adhered to were being crossed more than I could ever imagine, but it was done so in secret.

Apparently sexual encounters between white males and coloured females are not unheard of, but they happen at night, they happen in secret and, although the knowledge of these encounters seems to be getting around, they are rarely spoken about. The fact that these boundaries are only crossed in secret is significant in itself. It implies the unacceptability of the behaviour in question among the largest part of the community. Who exactly the perpetrators were, other than being white farmers, eludes my knowledge. A further probing into this issue was not something I wanted to pursue, due to the sensitivity of the issue and also because it was being kept under wraps deliberately. Thus, the reasons behind these clandestine visits to coloured women also elude my knowledge; they have been left to pure speculation.

4.3.2 Crossing boundaries: Project Paint

Up to now there has been a focus on the somewhat immovable boundaries within my research area – those that are best crossed in secret and, if discovered, will certainly be met with harsh judgment by fellow community members. However, while I conducted my research, I realised that some attempts were being made at reaching out over the existing boundaries in order to get in touch with the “other”, to do something for those who would normally not be considered as being part of the community – in this case the racial “other”. In this specific case, the local DRC congregation and preacher played a key role in initiating and guiding this outreach.

Just before one enters the town where I conducted my research, one passes a group of about 30 houses, situated right next to the road leading into town, occupied by coloured residents. This small cluster of houses has over the years generally become known as

District 30. The southern border of District 30 is lined with large oak trees, while the road leading into town forms the eastern border. On the north-western border a dust road led into a farm (the farm to which these houses used to belong), and the space in between was filled with 30 rectangular houses placed irregularly across this patch of hard ground and wild grass. Here and there the occupants of this District have isolated their front yards with wire fences. For Hill (2008:31), space has often been an important indicator of race. Hill (2008:31) explains that, where black and brown faces dominate the American streets, the background is often filled with ‘unpainted and sagging buildings, abandoned vehicles, graffitied walls, trash-filled gutters, weedy vacant lots’, etc. The conclusions that many draw from such observations are ‘that people of color are deficient as citizens’, as tidy spaces become an indication of civility (Hill, 2008:31). The theory holds true for District 30. There are no lawns here, only patches of clean, hard ground on which it seemed as if nothing would ever grow again. In between were patches of some form of wild grass, which made for a very green setting in the month of October. Some residents had planted flowers and small trees in their front yards, while others kept a few chickens around the house. Between some of the houses there were small, upright, corrugated iron structures – a shared toilet for the surrounding families. Clean washing lined some of the fences, a colourful touch to the somewhat glum surroundings. Coloured children played around in groups – jumping rope or kicking around a flat ball on polluted patches of green. The backdrop of a bright blue sky with a few plush white clouds and the ever-present mountains surrounding the area, painted quite an idyllic picture and stood in stark contrast to what was witnessed on the ground.

The preacher explained to me that District 30 was a small neighbourhood that had, due to circumstances, been left to its own devices, with no formal institution (neither the local municipality nor the farm that these houses were situated on) claiming responsibility for the upkeep of this group of houses. The farm owner, and thus the owner of these houses, had abandoned his responsibility mainly due to the fact that the houses were now occupied illegally.⁶¹

⁶¹ The Extension of Security and Tenure Act (ESTA) was introduced in 1997 and has ‘increased the tenure security rights of farm workers, especially for those employed for more than 10 years’ (Orton, Barrientos & McClenaghan, 2001:472-473). This law is ‘meant to prevent unfair and arbitrary evictions and promote

The current residents ended up at this farm owner uh... for who they did not work. These residents worked for different people and the owner of this land, of these houses, was not the... the landowner, the “baas” [uses hands to indicate quotation marks] to use the old term, of the land. Uh, I hope you can cut that one out [smiles]. So with all these occupations of these homes and the problematic processes that you have when you deal with these illegal owners or occupants, this became a real laborious process. But in the end, it is human beings who live there and we as a community, as a church [note the interchangeability of these two words: community/church], made use of varied attempts to improve the circumstances of these people (Preacher).

Regarding this piece of information there are a few comments to be made. First, by the hesitant way in which the preacher talks about this, choosing his words carefully and sometimes struggling to find the right words, it seems as if this is a sensitive issue for the farm owner and the preacher is cautious about stepping on any toes. The preacher is careful not to put blame on anyone for the deterioration of the homes or the living conditions of these workers. The preacher is also aware that this “illegal” claim to homes is a sensitive issue for all farm owners in the area – something that I found many struggle with. Second, the use of the term “baas” [boss] and the reaction it evoked from the preacher shows that he regards it as a somewhat discarded term and is thus careful in using it (indicated by the ‘I hope you can cut that one out’ response). It was interesting to note how there is a verbal distancing by the Preacher from such a concept, yet the project launched by the church seemed to resonate greatly with the concept of paternalism, or “*baasskap*”⁶² – a concept described by Sylvain (2001:728) as ‘European economic domination combined with the racist values and practices of apartheid’ – a theme that will be returned to at a later stage.

long-term security’ (Roodt, 2007:5). Thus, workers who are no longer employed by the farm on which they reside (and on which they have resided for more than 10 years) cannot simply be evicted and have the right to continue to reside on this farm, even as non-workers. This is particularly frustrating to the farmers I spoke to, as they do not have empty houses for their actual workers and are ‘stuck with the problems of people who do not work for [them]’ – people often labelled as ‘troublemakers’.

⁶² Translated by Sylvain (2001:718) literally as ‘boss-ship’, authority, dominance.

In District 30 the houses have deteriorated considerably over the years, and a few of them have even collapsed due to neglect. As a result, the local white community [also members of the local DRC] had decided that it was time ‘to do something about it’ (local resident).

The community felt that they wanted to do something to give these houses a prettier aesthetic worth, and in the end, you hope that you can do it for the residents. This process has developed over a long time. For three years now we wanted to do this... Over time this idea surrounding District 30 became quiet, but then suddenly the time became ripe to live out a story of hope in our community (Preacher).

Thus, under the leadership of the aesthetic committee (a DRC-based committee), Project Paint was launched.

As one of the members of the aesthetic committee, and also in terms of his role in the local community, the preacher was promoting this project in church in order to get the whole community, or at least some of its members, involved. ‘We decided to improve the look of our town, to make it more beautiful... We decided to improve these houses regardless of who lives there’ (Preacher). Small pamphlets were made available at the church doors after every service, through which people were given a chance to sign up teams and team leaders for Project Paint. But it was clear that, once again, the preacher was fully aware of the mixed feelings within his community regarding this project:

I know that there are 110 objections to this. If you want to help then I ask you to become involved in this. Even if these illegal occupants and all the laws frustrate us, we just want to send out good signs into the world (Preacher).

And indeed, there were objections and, although they were somewhat varied, one common thread could be found: time and money could have been better spent than on these “undeserving” and “unappreciative” people.

In a year’s time that place will look just as bad as it did before. They [coloureds] don’t have respect for anything, they don’t know how to look after their things (Farmer, early 60s).

Now they spend all this money on those houses and what’s going to happen? I’ll tell you what. Within a year those houses will look just as bad as they did at the start of the project. They will just ruin it again (*Hulle gaan dit net weer deur hulle*

gat trek). They don't know how to look after their things because they don't care to look after their things (Male, mid-30s).

The preacher was well aware that there were some objections to this project and that not everyone was keen to get involved. This was noted in the emphasis the preacher placed on the fact that the project was 'not compulsory, but completely on voluntary basis' (Preacher). The same was evident when he made the following announcement in church regarding the project:

If you feel like picking up a paintbrush for two days then please come. We do it to make some people's lives better... You don't have to give a moral verdict regarding the matter, you don't have to decide whether it is right or wrong. If your heart feels like doing it then come, otherwise don't. But uhm, we're going to cross a boundary, we're going to cross a very clear boundary (Preacher).

But the reluctance of some church members, or members of the community (for in this small town this term was mostly interchangeable) to reach out to the racial "other" was evident. It was a leap that few were willing to take. At the preparation meeting in the church hall this became quite obvious. While 30 tables had been set out (representing the 30 houses to be painted), each surrounded by 10 chairs (making room for a maximum of ten team members for each team), what greeted the preacher at the start of the meeting was a majority of empty seats and even some empty tables. The preacher and main organisers of this project had clearly expected a bigger turnout, and the number of open seats (and even open tables) painted a dismal picture for the amount of support that this project enjoyed within the community.

As mentioned earlier, there were about 30 houses to be painted over the course of a single day. For every house there was a project leader from the DRC. Businesses, the church, youth groups, as well as farm workers, all took part in this project. In preparation for the big day when all the teams would finally assemble to apply the final coat of paint, every house was sprayed down with high-pressured hoses and fixed up. All the cracks were fixed, the roofs were fixed, broken windows were replaced, and the undercoats of paint were applied to successfully complete the groundwork. These repairs and preparations were done by coloured workers employed by some of the white people involved in the

project. It was finally on one Saturday in October 2010 that white faces started to gather where they would rarely be seen under normal circumstances. On that day, the troop of whites invaded District 30, armed with their pick-up trucks, paint, goodwill, and of course, their trusted coloured workers to do most of the menial labour. But these were willing participants, they had chosen to be there and they were visibly excited to transform the idea of Project Paint into reality. Young and old, male and female, were there not only to make their town more attractive, but also to make a small difference in the lives of the coloured community who occupied this space – a space that had been radically transformed on this Saturday morning even before the painting started. Where once were only coloured residents, now were groups of white faces. Another important observation was that this space, where no resident owned a car, now suddenly looked like a farmer's convention – pick-up trucks parked between houses, in front of houses, next to the road – visible everywhere. For me, this army of pick-up trucks seemed particularly out of place in this coloured community.

On site it soon became clear to me that the motives for this project were varied. It was a way of doing something for others – a morally “feel-good” project; it was a way of crossing a boundary – doing something for a coloured community of farm workers; and it was to beautify the area – let us not lose sight of the fact that this was a project launched by the aesthetic committee, so it could be argued that there was a certain selfish motive pushing it. I enquired about the motives for participation and found them to be somewhat varied. For some it was about doing something for their church congregation, thus for their own community, more than it was about reaching across a racial boundary.

Of course we're doing something good for our community. We drive past this place and we see these houses every day (Male, early 30s).

We're part of the church, and yes, young people also have a responsibility toward the community, so we try to do our part (Female, early 20s).

For others it was about reaching out to the racial other – to cross that boundary the preacher had highlighted in his sermons.

For me, today is about the boundaries that I'm crossing (Male farmer, early 40s).

These people are so poor, and you cannot lift yourself up by your bootstraps, someone has to help you. At the end of the day we're getting more out of this than they are (Male, late 50s).

What you see, the outside effect is pretty, but the deeper part of this, the inner outreach towards other people means so much more. And this is what it's all about, that you don't just make the outside beautiful, but that you are happy inside as well and that you helped somewhere (Organiser, female, early 30s).

It shouldn't stop here, we have to do the insides now. We should really work at improving their quality of life (Female, early 50s).

We don't want to change that area to be grand or cute, we're doing this to tell these people that we see them, it's to show that we want to live in a prettier world (Female, late 30s).

According to the organisers of the project, the residents of these homes initially viewed the project with some scepticism. However, with the realisation of the project the scepticism quickly turned into gratitude.

I can't say thank you enough to all the men, women and children that came to help us because it's been tough but now I see that it will be much better (Coloured female resident, 50s).

Nothing like this has ever happened to us (Coloured male resident, late 50s).

These responses were reminiscent of the fact that this project, or these few days, represented something very much out of the ordinary. It was not something that happened every day, or even ever. Indeed, a boundary had been crossed, but under what conditions and how permanent would this breach be?

At the end of it all, it seemed as if this project truly was an attempt to reach out to the racial other, to cross the racial boundary in some significant way. This was also noted by the local preacher:

We had no budget for this and at the end of the day we completed this project through the goodwill of others... You know, this probably works towards both ways, ways in which we can't even see. I think that some of the good we'll see is the relationships... I think that these people will look at everyone that drives past,

those that stand here today and drive past tomorrow and see, there goes my friend (Preacher).

What I only noticed afterward, regarding this quote, was the fact that this outreach was expected to be short lived. ‘Those that stand here today and drive past tomorrow’ is a “not-so-hidden” reference to the fact that, whoever found themselves there on the day would only drive past tomorrow looking at Project Paint as a job well done. No one was expected to stop there again to build on these so-called relationships that had been created over the course of the project. Although a major boundary seemed to have been crossed, this crossing in no way represented a permanent one. It seemed to me as if this crossing of a boundary was reminiscent of entering a liminal phase of interaction with the racial other. It was nothing more than a generous moment in time which too would pass. A return to normality seemed somewhat evident, in terms of which a stable state⁶³ would once more be reached, again establishing the ‘rights and obligations of a clearly defined “structural” type’ where individuals were ‘expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards’ (Turner, 1994 [1967]:5). And, ultimately, the existing boundaries would be reinforced.

4.4 Conclusion

I had to conclude that while some boundaries were strictly kept in place, attempts had been made to cross others. And while some members of the community were eager to cross boundaries, others were reluctant. This was evidence of the differentiation of attitudes found among my research subjects. While I may initially have viewed my research subjects as a single grouping of people, I found that differences were to be found in this small group of people. There were no easy generalisations to be made, and no stereotype to support such generalisations. But it was also found that the attempts that were made to cross the racial boundary were conditional and limited. By no means did such crossing close the social distance between whites and coloureds in the area to the point where they invited each other over for afternoon tea or dinner – not to mention marrying their children off to the racial other. As Schutte (1995:230) found in his research, I also had to conclude that the ‘rural whites interviewed ... had a sharp

⁶³ State refers to ‘any type of stable or recurrent condition that is culturally recognized’ (Turner, 1994 [1967]:4).

awareness of the differences between blacks and whites’, and that ‘[t]hey drew solid physical and social boundaries between themselves and blacks’. According to Schutte (1995:230), such boundaries ‘were constructed and sustained by deeply held convictions and traditional values’.

In this chapter it has been illustrated how racial boundaries are both kept in place, and also perpetuated, and also how, and under what conditions, they have been crossed. These issues were discussed in the light of being in place and out of place. Based on Douglas’s argument, I found that there was a definite place and time to cross boundaries to be considered in place or out of place. During the two days that Project Paint came to fruition, as I stood there seeing all the white faces and the countless pickup trucks, I could not help but think how out of place this scene would have been had it not taken place in broad daylight. Had I been the witness to only one white farmer and his pickup truck visiting this place at night, it would have been some cause for controversy. For the whites of this area, in order to be considered even remotely in place, this coloured community was only to be visited during broad daylight, in groups, and for a very specific purpose (usually tied to goodwill). A visit at night would be considered a matter out of place, in other words, it would be coupled with thoughts of dirt and pollution.

What I also realised is that the crossing of boundaries within this community was reminiscent of Van Gennep’s *Rites de passage*, where he argued that all rites of transition ‘are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or limen), and aggregation (Turner, 1994 [1967]:5). I witnessed my research subjects reach across boundaries, finding themselves in a liminal space, ‘that which is neither this nor that, and yet is both’ (Turner, 1994 [1967]:5). I watched them encountering the in between – ‘a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state’ (Turner, 1994 [1967]:5). This liminal phase of crossing boundaries also linked with the concept of pollution, as highlighted by Douglas (1966), who is of the opinion that this concept ‘is a reaction to protect cherished principles and categories from contradiction’ (Turner, 1994 [1967]:7). It is exactly that which is unclear and contradictory that ‘tends to be regarded as unclean’ – that which is ‘neither one thing nor another, or may be both’, that which is ‘betwixt and between all the recognized fixed points in the space-time of structural classification’ (Turner, 1994

[1967]:7). My research subjects found themselves passing through a liminal phase, crossing the somewhat fixed boundaries of interracial interaction, but again reaching a stable state – returning to normality and reinforcing the existing racial boundaries in the process.

The fact that certain boundaries remain fixed in a non-negotiable manner, and others crossed only conditionally, leads me to reach a similar conclusion as Suttles (1972:187), that ‘there is a nostalgia for a past in which interpersonal and territorial solidarities were more fixed’. And, also similar to Suttles’s (1972:188,176) findings, the way in which my subjects deal with such nostalgia involves distancing. Boundaries are thus employed partly for this reason – holding on to that which is no more in order to ‘maintain the identity of their group by instilling in its members a code of belief and conduct that emphasizes the need to maintain boundaries of *all* kinds’ (Davies, 1982:1060). Although no legal segregation exists to keep the races divided in my research area, my research subjects are holding on to the boundaries of the past, distancing themselves from the act of integration and, intrinsic to this, distancing themselves from the racial “other”. These boundaries have survived across generations, mainly due to the successful socialisation of the community - a theme that will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIALISATION IN THE COMMUNITY: SPACE, PLACE AND RACE

5.1 Introduction

During my fieldwork it became clear to me that a racial divide stemming from apartheid South Africa was still visible to a large extent in my research area. This racial divide did not cease to exist among the younger population of this area – those who had grown up in post-apartheid South Africa. I found that the attitudes and beliefs regarding the racial other had survived in the younger generations. This was a theme that needed to be explored. How had these attitudes survived? And why did such attitudes persist? I immediately thought back to a sermon I attended in which the local preacher had briefly addressed the existence of lingering attitudes inspired by an apartheid past. The role of race consciousness as a habit of thought was central to his argument.

We think of habits as something that is naturally ingrained in us. It's not. All of us, or many of the older people sitting here, grew up during apartheid. We inherited many habits as children – how to think of the racial “other” and to think of them as being inferior. Most of us grew up with this idea. To now distance ourselves from this idea is a process ... But if I start doing things out of habit it becomes part of myself and my descendants (Preacher).

While the preacher seemed to believe that race consciousness and the beliefs that accompany it are mere habits learned throughout life to be regarded as norms that carry an absolute truth value, he is not alone when he verbalises these beliefs. For Jansen (2009:171), the knowledge that we believe we are born with – a knowledge automatically inherited without any outside forces of formation, a knowledge that he refers to as ‘knowledge in the blood’, is ‘habitual, a knowledge that has long been routinized ... [i]t

is emphatic knowledge that does not tolerate ambiguity ... [it is] singular, sanctified, and sure'. Alcoff (2001:275) seems to be in agreement and argues that '[p]erceptual practices can be organized ... into integrated units that become habitual'. But how does one acquire such habits? According to Mac Naughton and Davis (2009:17), 'race consciousness is ... as far as observation goes, an acquired trait'. Children are not born with such a consciousness, they are conditioned by their surroundings to acquire such a consciousness. Thus, socialization seems to be central to the formation of lasting "habits".

According to Jansen (2008:64) '[l]ittle can be done to disrupt' what is learned through socialisation. Alcoff (2001:276) is in agreement and argues that 'racializing attributions are nearly impossible to discern and ... are resistant to alteration or erasure'. By becoming habitualised, our beliefs become 'so attenuated as to skip the stage of conscious interpretation and intent' (Alcoff, 2001:276). De Villiers (1988) sheds some light on this problematic, arguing (1988:366) that '[a]partheid ha[d] existed all [his] conscious life. We never had to be "taught" apartheid ... because it was simply there'. It was accepted by many simply without question. As Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:167) would argue, what 'goes without saying, comes without saying'.

Fisher (2007:114) is of the opinion that 'the legacy of apartheid will always underpin our society'. In his study on race in South Africa, Fisher (2007:156) encountered the following response from a teenager: '[r]acism will never be eliminated. We listen to our parents and they come from apartheid. They taught us about apartheid and we will teach our children and the circle will continue forever'. In this chapter it will be argued that socialisation plays an all-important role in keeping attitudes and ideas alive in each new generation, and that the objectivity of the communicated values and beliefs "thickens and hardens", not only for the children, but (by a mirror effect) for the parents as well' (Berger and Luckmann, 2002 [1966]:45). In other words, these values and beliefs become an objective, accepted reality – often taking the form of an unquestioned truth; they become a social fact. In this sense it is not only accepted as objective truth, but, in effect, is able to exercise constraints and guide individual action – it limits the possibilities and choices open for the individual (a theme that will be returned to later) (Noble, 2000:159).

The role of socialisation in establishing these social facts is undeniable and its somewhat irreversible nature, its resistance to alteration or erasure, makes it all the more problematic. In order to illustrate and explain socialisation at work, I shall draw on Bourdieu's habitus and the role of 'structuring structures' in society.

5.2 The creation of lasting habits: Socialisation and the habitus

De Witt and Booysen (1995:2) define socialisation as 'the transmission of conduct, roles, attitudes, and values from one generation to another'. Elkin, as cited in Williams (1983:xiii), defines it as 'the process by which someone learns the ways of a given society or social group so that he can function within it', or rather, 'to participate as more or less effective members of groups and society' (Williams, 1983:xiv). For Reich and Adcock (1976:43-44), it is specifically the transmission of attitudes that deserves attention. The significance of this theme is simply unavoidable in the discussion of race and racial categories, for it is in the domain of attitudes that stereotypes of the 'other' are strengthened and prejudice is found.⁶⁴ In most cases, the transmission of attitudes also involves ideas built around stereotypes.⁶⁵ Of course, to discuss the issue of values, beliefs and attitudes in accordance with race would necessitate the mention of prejudice, specifically racial prejudice. Drawing on the definition of attitudes, racial prejudice would refer to any 'negative attitude, that one is predisposed to feel, think and behave towards [the racial other] in a predictable negative way' (Reich and Adcock, 1976:50).

Based on the definitions above, two important aspects of socialisation can be highlighted. Firstly, socialisation refers to the transmission of beliefs, values and attitudes to each new generation. Secondly, these values and beliefs prepare the individual to function as an effective member of his/her group or community. It is through socialisation that the young child 'learns to comply with the moral standards, role expectations and constraints of acceptable conduct in his own society' (De Witt and Booysen, 1995:2). As Riley (2007:136) argues, '[a]dults adopt socialization routines aimed at shaping competent

⁶⁴ Reich and Adcock (1976:29) define attitudes as 'enduring systems of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and pro or con action techniques with respect to social objects'. For Rokeach (1969:112), an attitude 'is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner'.

⁶⁵ Stereotypes refer to the act of assigning certain characteristics to a particular group, thereby forming expectations of what attributes a typical member of that group will possess (Reich and Adcock, 1976:51).

adult selves in conformity with local notions of personhood'. Socialisation involves establishing expectations and what is considered as acceptable conduct, and 'from birth the family and the community impress these values upon the child' in order to 'shape a suitable group member' (De Witt and Booysen, 1995:2). In a similar vein Riley (2007:133) argues that 'all human societies develop representations of their ideal, competent adult member and adopt behavioural strategies for reproducing individuals in their image and likeness'. This idea of 'reproducing individuals' resonates with the 'structuring structures' as referred to by Bourdieu's habitus.

According to Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:72), the habitus is produced by enduring and perpetuating structures constituting a particular environment. The habitus thus consists not only of existing structures, but also structures that will inevitably structure its successor, in other words, 'structuring structures' (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:72). In the words of Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:72), and here it is worth quoting him at length, these structures

generate practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.

Thus, the habitus represents a continuous flow of the transmission of beliefs and values, and all that accompanies them. Due to the fact that this transmission is not necessarily intended, or done purposefully, 'without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends', the habitus remains uninterrupted and often unquestioned, and is able to perpetuate itself, ultimately strengthening its hold on society.

For successful integration into the community, the specifics of what children need to learn regarding self-regulation, appropriate social roles, etc., become central to the process of socialisation. It is within this learning process that the child will find the proper material to ultimately become 'the product of the systematic application of principles coherent in practice' (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:88). This means that the

individual needs to internalise and conform to what has been communicated (either through speech or actions) and that deviations from these values and beliefs will not necessarily be greeted with enthusiasm by the group or community. For Riley (2007:133), the aim of socialisation is ‘to satisfy parents’ and society’s expectations concerning the individual’s cultural competence, his or her ability to behave appropriately in the situations they are called upon to participate in’.

The success in reproducing individuals who conform to the standards of the group, who ‘behave appropriately’, lies locked up in the acceptance of these transmitted views and beliefs as being *objective* truths generated by *objective* structures, which are *objectively* regulated, and *objectively* adapted. In fact, Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:80) is of the opinion that this is ‘one of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus’, namely ‘the production of a commonsense world endowed with the *objectively* secured consensus on the meaning of practices in the world’. The basic assumption is always that one is socialised according to the truth. This ultimately leads to the homogenisation of the habitus, which in turn leads to everyday practices being taken for granted (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:80). In short, the structures are determinate of the conditions of existence and produce the habitus, ‘which become in turn the basis of perception ... of all subsequent experience’ (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:78). It proves itself to act as an ‘imminent law ... laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing, which is the precondition for the coordination of practices’ (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:81). Thus, the habitus ‘produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history’ (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:82). It is a continuous flow of a surviving past in the present and future, shaping practices ‘according to its principles’, where every moment is considered to be nothing more and nothing less than the appropriation of a collective history (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:82,85). The habitus, then, constitutes internalised, objective structures determining a shared worldview for its members (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:86). What is of great importance is the uninterrupted communication of this shared worldview to each new generation. The role of socialisation is invaluable to this process.

5.3 The community

During my fieldwork I found myself particularly drawn to a very specific part of my research area: a small community⁶⁶ of white, Afrikaans-speaking individuals centred around the local DRC (meaning membership of the community was based on membership of the DRC – the two terms becoming basically interchangeable). Another important institution to mention in this regard is the primary school located just down the street from the church. This community consisted of two neighbourhoods, the neighbourhood at the bottom of the hill (also home to the church, the school, the police station and other businesses), and the neighbourhood at the top of the hill, which mainly consisted of homes. Another important element to the membership of this community was the surrounding farms and the white farmers. The proximity of these farms was of such a nature that no homestead was located more than eight kilometres from the church. This was a typical white middleclass area. The streets were quiet, the front lawns and gardens were pristine, and the houses maintained their small-town innocence by having open front yards instead of surrounding walls. This was a close-knit community in which everyone knew everyone and the Sunday teas after church still mattered.

The concept of community has always been synonymous with a sense of sharing. This sense of sharing ‘can refer to space, norms, values, customs, beliefs, rules, or obligations’ (Berns, 2007 [1997]:401). The community can be viewed as ‘a microsystem in which much socialization and development take place’ (Berns, 2007 [1997]:402). It is in the community ‘where children learn the role expectations for adults as well as for themselves [and] get to observe, model, and become apprentices to adults’ (Berns, 2007 [1997]:405). Social participation is encouraged in the community and social control is enforced – referring to ‘adherence to community values’ either through formal laws or group pressure (Berns, 2007 [1997]:403). According to Berns (2007 [1997]:403), ‘[t]he ways in which a particular community performs these functions influence the socialization of children growing up there’.

Berns (2007 [1997]:412) specifically draws conclusions based on a small-town setting, a setting that I have become all too familiar with during my research. According to Berns

⁶⁶ Note that community is used here as it was used in the previous chapter. I refer the reader to p.70.

(2007 [1997]:412), '[i]nteraction in a small town involves close contact with relatives, friends, and acquaintances' and generally incurs a close involvement in each others' lives. Thus, Berns (2007 [1997]:412) concludes that '[t]he norms of a small town are more homogeneous than those of a large city, and also more widely understood and accepted'. This provides the perfect setting for shared convictions of what is acceptable and unacceptable, proper or improper, right or wrong, 'to be passed on from generation to generation and become institutionalized' (Berns, 2007 [1997]:412). Berns (2007 [1997]:412) thus concludes: '[t]he community, then, becomes the medium through which the basic values, norms, and customs of society are interpreted and reinforced through repeated interaction of community members'.

Berns (2007 [1997]:21) refers to the community as a microsystem. This microsystem is comprised of many elements or, more accurately referred to in this particular case, it is comprised of the many agents of socialisation. The agents of socialisation are actively and constantly involved in the transmission of values, beliefs and attitudes. These include 'the activities and relationships with significant others experienced by a developing person in a particular small setting' (Berns, 2007 [1997]:21). It is within each of these settings that 'the child's development is affected ... not only by the child's relationships with others ... but also by interactions among members of the particular microsystem' (Berns, 2007 [1997]:21).⁶⁷

Socialisation, referring here to the transmission of values, beliefs and attitudes, occurs mainly through two avenues, namely instruction and modelling. Socialisation through instruction involves verbal communication – a form of intentional socialisation, that which is 'done on purpose' (Berns, 2007 [1997]:12). This is probably considered the

⁶⁷ Drawing on the works of Jansen (2009), De Witt and Booysen (1995) and Berns (2007 [1997]), I found that, although very similar, the main agents of socialisation identified by these authors deviate slightly from one author to the next. De Witt and Booysen (1995:7) identify the most significant contributors to the socialisation of the young child as being the family first and foremost, the school or day care, the peer group, and the mass media. Berns (2007 [1997]:21) is of the opinion that the microsystem is comprised of the 'family, school, [and] peer group'. For Jansen (2009), writing from a South African perspective, these agents consist of, and this is especially true in the case of Afrikaners, the family, the church, the school, cultural networks, and peers. It was with these identified agents of socialisation in mind that I observed this close-knit community. After my time in the field I decided not to outline each of these agents in detail, but rather to incorporate those I found to be most relevant, and most visibly at work in this community, in order to provide a general overview of the messages transmitted.

most common form of socialisation, as it refers to the process where ‘adults have certain values that they consistently convey explicitly to the child’ supported by ‘approval for compliance and negative consequences for non-compliance’ (Berns, 2007 [1997]:12). But socialisation can also be unintentional. This is usually socialisation through modelling or imitation – or as Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:87) refers to it, the act of leading by example. Such socialisation ‘takes place spontaneously during human interaction, without the deliberate intent to impart knowledge or values’ (Berns, 2007 [1997]:12). It can occur through actual involvement or through the observation of others (Berns, 2007 [1997]:12).

According to Thompson and Carter (1997:8), basic assumptions regarding race ‘are learned through imitation, and internalized by a need to conform to racial norms and accepted by society at large’. This sentiment was shared by Williams (1983:xiii) when he argued that ‘children could or would just naturally learn by spontaneous imitation’. Within the home, the role of imitation, acquiring attitudes, values and beliefs through modelling, should not be underestimated. Porter (1971:14) argues that since the child ‘is not born with social values and attitudes, topics beyond his comprehension leave him no alternative but to internalize the values of others’. Children ‘begin to assume attitudes of the people they would like to emulate’, in this case, their parents⁶⁸ (Berns, 2007 [1997]:458-459). The family thus becomes ‘one of the most important agents of attitude transmission’ (Porter, 1971:14). This correlates with Freud’s argument regarding the acquisition of morality, values and attitudes. In his case he argued that the child develops the superego ‘through a process of *identification* and this identification is initially with the parents’ (Reich and Adcock, 1976:42). It is through this identification that the values of the parents are internalised – where the child ‘accept[s] the parents’ norms, values, and behavior patterns as his own’ (Porter, 1971:14).

Hello, Scheepers, Vermulst and Gerris (2004:255) further argue that, although ‘parents teach their children certain values, children [also] learn their parents’ values themselves

⁶⁸ The parents’ impact on their child’s attitudes should not be underestimated. Studies have shown ‘that the attitudes of children tend to resemble those of their parents’ (Berns, 2007 [1997]:458). In a study conducted in the United States it was found that ‘76% of a national sample of high school seniors favored the political party favored by both of their parents’ (Berns, 2007 [1997]:458).

when parents discuss certain topics at home'. Porter (1971:14) identifies overheard conversations between parents in this same vein. He is of the opinion that, when adults discuss 'matters pertaining to racial issues with one another', they often assume that 'the child nearby has neither the interest nor the intellectual capacity to follow their conversation' (Porter, 1971:14). I found that the use of derogatory terms for the racial other was often a part of conversations between adults in the home. Derogatory terms were also used to describe negative behaviour. During a rugby game watched on television, bad rugby would be verbalised as 'they're playing like a bunch of h*tn*ts'. Or unacceptable behaviour would be greeted with '*jy gedra jou soos 'n h*tn*t/m**d*' [you're acting like a h*tn*t/m**d]. By using these terms to refer to the racial other, white adults manage to highlight not only difference, but negative attitudes towards the racial other, as well as coupling negative behaviour with the supposed standard behaviour of the racial other. The fact is that young children often do take notice of such conversations, and they can and do influence their attitudes toward the racial other (Porter, 1971:14).

I found that derogatory terms used to refer to the racial other were part of everyday talk amongst most of my research subjects. There was simply no other way to refer to the racial other, even in the light of good intentions. I recall one story told to me by a female respondent (early 50s). Upon hearing about my research topic she immediately explained that she is not a racist. That is when she told me the following story.

Just the other day I was driving along the road just off the main street and I saw this woman walking next to the road carrying shopping bags. She looked like she was struggling with all the bags and she looked white when I approached her so I stopped to offer her a ride. But when I stopped next to her I wasn't so sure anymore, I could not tell whether she was white or coloured. But I offered her a ride regardless and thought that if I see where she lives I will be able to figure out. When we arrived at her home I told her I am not a racist... [at this moment my respondent realised that she had left out a crucial part of her story. When she arrived at her passenger's home she had indeed figured out whether the woman was white or coloured, but she had failed to inform me of her conclusion. She stopped midsentence and added:] *want toe is sy nou 'n m**d* [because she was a m**d].

This was quite astonishing to me. My respondent had managed to explain her acts of goodwill towards the racial other, stated that she was not a racist, and made use of a derogatory term to refer to the woman she helped, all in one story. I realised that the derogatory term, as used by my respondent, was not as loaded with racist meaning to her (my respondent) as it was to me, the listener. It was simply everyday talk, the norm in terms of referring to the racial other. These derogatory terms were used without thinking about meaning and consequence. It was just everyday talk.

Berns (2007 [1997]:458) is of the opinion that ‘ethnic prejudice also follows this general pattern’ of attitude transmission in the home. As one of Steyn’s (2001:52) respondents remarked: ‘I grew up in a house where “black” was viewed as being less human, less intelligent.’ Another made a very similar remark, stating: ‘[y]ou are born and your parents bring you up in the way of the old South Africa’ (Steyn, 2001:64). This corresponds to the argument of Hughes and Johnson (2001:982), who found that ‘parents were likely to transmit to children the sorts of racial socialization messages they had received during their own upbringing’. And, building on this argument, Hello et al (2004:255) argue that ‘the attitudes and values children form in the family context persist well into adulthood’. It is the simple perpetuation of the habitus at work.

5.3.1 Socialisation in the home: The role of the domestic worker

It seems that most authors are in agreement that the home, or the family, is the most important agent of socialisation.⁶⁹ Berns (2007 [1997]:21) identifies the home as ‘the primary socializer of the child in that it has the most significant impact on the child’s development’. According to Berns (2007 [1997]:459), ‘[y]oung children accept as true the statements of their parents ... because, with their limited experience, they are not apt to have heard anything different’. Thus, what is communicated by the parents, in other words, the instructions passed down to the child, is accepted as an absolute truth. It is not met with resistance, it is not questioned. Park (2009 [2000]:171) is in agreement and argues that it is

⁶⁹ Contrary to many studies conducted in the first half of the 19th century, more recent studies have indicated that ‘awareness of racial differences occurs between the ages of three and five’ (Porter, 1971:27). A number of studies suggest ‘that racial attitudes are learned during the preschool years’ (Porter, 1971:1). Thus, the home as an agent of socialisation becomes all the more important with regard to values, beliefs and attitudes regarding the racial other.

becoming more obvious ... that the things one learns in the intimate association of the family are likely to be more permanent and more profound in their effects upon one's character in determining the individual's conception of himself, his outlook on life, his relations to other people.

According to Jansen (2009:71), the family forms a tight and cohesive group with strict parental authority, where the child is expected to 'fall into line', whether or not it makes sense (Jansen, 2009:71). Jansen (2009:71,72) is of the opinion that 'this is particularly strong among Afrikaner families' and that the family 'lies at the centre of the socialization of the child ... [it] lays the foundation for any future understandings of self, of community, of history'.

Schutte (1995:181) also places a lot of emphasis on socialisation in the home. He argues, specifically in the South African case, that 'from a very young age, the racial socialization of white children occurs in the home' (Schutte, 1995:181). It is here that white children observe first-hand how coloured or black nannies/maids and gardeners are employed to do 'inferior' work, such as scrubbing the floors and digging in the garden. These servants also address their white employers as "baas" (boss, master) [and] "miesies" (missus)' (Schutte, 1995:184). It is within this environment that white children grow up. According to Thompson and Carter (1997:7),

[w]ho we see and do not see on day-to-day basis, the roles we see people assume, and importantly, how these people appear and are treated in comparison to others communicate powerful and lasting messages about who we are and are not.

Specifically interesting in this regard was the role of the coloured domestic workers in the white households of my research area. In the white households I observed the everyday menial tasks performed by domestic workers. These involved everything from making the beds, doing the laundry, cleaning the entire house, cooking, and washing the dishes. I found that, in trying to find the domestic worker, it is your safest to first look in the kitchen, specifically in front of the kitchen sink. This was where they washed dishes throughout the day, where they prepared their lunch, and where they drank their coffee. The general image of the domestic worker was of a woman standing in front of the kitchen sink, with a checkered coverall dress and rolled up sleeves, because apparently

this is not a job for white hands: ‘my hands weren’t made to touch dishwater’ (female, mid-20s).

Although a very comfortable and close relationship usually existed between the domestic worker and the family, the relationship was still characterised by a clear hierarchy and the domestic worker still had to know her place in this hierarchy. It was striking to note that every time the domestic worker made a cup of coffee for herself she reached for one of the cups under the kitchen sink, a discarded, often chipped mug that was once good enough for the family to use. Time and again I watched how the domestic worker reached for a cup under the kitchen sink, stored separate from those of her white employers, driving the message home that she will always be somewhat out of place in her all too familiar working space (Schutte, 1995:184). The domestic worker also did not sit next to the kitchen table when eating lunch, but rather on the back porch by the washing lines. Yet, it was not uncommon for the *miesies* (missus) and the domestic worker to engage in long conversations about things other than work, or for the domestic worker to be included in a conversation with a friend: ‘*Sarie, kom vertel gou hier*’ [Sarie, come here and tell that story]. It became clear that the relationships between families and domestic workers were based on both inclusion and exclusion – the act of which was in turn based on a visible racial hierarchy.

I found that the familiar role of the domestic worker extended beyond the white household. In preparation for Project Paint, a fundraiser was held that involved selling hamburgers. A few women of the community were called on to prepare these hamburgers in the church kitchen. On the day that these preparations took place I peeked in to find a group of 10 white women bustling in the kitchen – all open counter space now covered with hamburgers that were slowly and systematically nearing their completion. I also found, as I have on so many other occasions, that some of these women had brought along their coloured domestic workers to help out. However, as usual, these coloured workers were brought to do the menial labour. While the white women were preparing the hamburgers, the four coloured domestic workers occupied their familiar space in front of the kitchen sink, washing dirty dishes. The only thing missing from this image was the old chipped coffee cups that usually hide in their usual separate cupboard.

The fact that gardeners and cleaners within this community have remained exclusively coloured and black has contributed to the reinforcement and sustained social hierarchy of a not so distant past. It has also contributed to sustaining ‘the idea that *sociorace* is equated with dramatic and distinct differences beyond skin color and physical appearance’ (Thompson and Carter, 1997:7). This was illustrated by a study conducted by Steyn (2001:52), who concluded that ‘[t]hrough the way they were positioned vis-à-vis people who shared their daily lives, white children acquired a general sense of superiority’. Schutte (1995:183) makes a similar argument when he states that

experiences around the table and experiences connected with sharing in general drive home important messages to white children: The servants do “inferior” work, they are black, they do not share things with us associated with body contact ... their needs come last, and our “place” is not their place – although they work in it.

Here it is illustrated how racial categories have been ascribed specific roles and specific places in society. In my research area it was clear to see that coloureds people occupied the roles of domestic workers and gardeners – roles that no white person assumed, not as a paid occupation at least. It was a racial hierarchy being acted out on day-to-day basis, driving home the message to all parties involved that, in short, white hands ‘were not made to wash the dishes’ or, for that matter, any such inferior job performed by coloured workers.

My findings correspond to those of Steyn (2001:51), who concluded that the simple observations of children growing up during apartheid were soon ‘polarized by socialization into a world of “them” and “us”’. What the children of apartheid observed was the specific roles that every racial category was assigned to. In my research area I observed a continuation of the ‘typical’ roles being assumed by whites, coloureds and blacks – yet another continuity of apartheid South Africa that still succeeded in creating polarisation and a perpetuation of the racial hierarchy. Although not specifically verbally communicated, the typical roles assumed by different racial categories proved to be taken for granted, to simply be accepted as ‘the way things should be’. It is through the act of socialisation that the reality of these values and beliefs are strengthened, for if one communicates these values and beliefs as ‘the way things are done’, it often means ‘one believes it oneself’ (Berger and Luckmann, 2002 [1966]:46). This “objective” reality,

communicated from one generation to the next, acts as a constant presence in time, seemingly having no specific point of origin or demise – ‘it was there before [one] was born, and it will be there after [one’s] death’ (Berger and Luckmann, 2002 [1966]:46).

5.3.2 Socialisation outside the home: Space and place

Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:167) is of the opinion that ‘[b]etween the child and the world the whole group intervenes’. For Berns (2007 [1997]:22), ‘the community, or neighborhood on a smaller scale, is the main setting in which children learn by doing’. According to Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:87), ‘in all societies, children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their eyes, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult’. Hughes and Johnson (2001:981) argue that ‘race-related communications to children [are] important determinants of children’s race-related attitudes and beliefs and of their sense of efficacy in negotiating race-related barriers’. Berns (2007 [1997]:404) argues that

[t]he neighborhood or neighborhoods (nearby geographic areas) in which we grew up conjure up rich imagery of what constitutes a sense of community ... Part of the imagery of the neighborhood in which we grew up involves the people who lived there.

In his research, Seekings (2008:14) concluded that ‘very few South Africans live in racially integrated neighbourhoods’. Similar to Bray et al (2010:97), I had to conclude that, in this particular community, ‘most people reside in neighbourhoods whose populations are – in apartheid terminology – overwhelmingly either “African”, or “coloured” or “white”, but not a mix of these’. This was also evident in my research area, where the historically white neighbourhoods have remained white – that is, apart from the coloured domestic workers and gardeners who enter the neighbourhood every day to work and exit again at the end of the day.

To provide the reader with a general feel for this community and its members, I again choose to draw on the happenings that involve the local Dutch Reformed Church. Situated in the middle of the neighbourhood at the bottom of the hill, right down the street from the primary school, I found that the DRC was an integral part of this particular community. It was also noted in the previous chapter that being a member of

this church was synonymous with being a member of the community. In the previous chapter, the role of the church regarding the views and attitudes toward the racial other was identified and described. As has been noted, Afrikaner churches, of which the foremost, both historically and in my area of research, is the Dutch Reformed Church, provided the theological justification for apartheid. This same church still provides a moral compass for Afrikaners today – particularly in my own research area. From a very early age, children attend church, as well as Sunday school, to be informed and guided (Jansen, 2009:73). In my research area, the DRC boasted with all-white membership in an all-white community.

Some controversy arose when, one Saturday in December 2010, the DRC, situated in the middle of a white neighbourhood, was used for the funeral of a coloured woman. The woman who had died had worked as a domestic for a member of this church. This woman, who was a member of the local DRC and had a very close relationship with her domestic worker, had asked the preacher for the use of the ‘white’ church for the funeral, and so this was to be the case. However, many older members of the church had a big problem with coloured people invading their church. While the preacher and a member of his church gladly stepped over historically defined social boundaries, many others were fixed on keeping those boundaries firmly intact. A farmer belonging to the same church was extremely angered by this event, claiming that their church ‘was being used by a bunch of “*h*tn*ts*”’. According to this farmer, the historically ‘white’ church was to be kept exactly like that. It was not the place for coloureds or blacks. For some reason it had to be kept clean of such invasions. Even if the church was not used on that day by whites, it should rather have been kept empty than allow the coloured community to use it.⁷⁰

It seems as if the residents of the community have tried to reserve this space for whites only. Upon speaking to one of my male respondents, who also happened to serve on the school board during the 1990s, I noted that the 1994 election proved to bring many

⁷⁰ This story resonates with a play by Elsa Joubert, ‘*Die Sendeling*’ – a drama set in the apartheid years that revolves around the death of a minister in a small rural town in the late sixties. Upon his death, his widow and her sister ask an Afrikaans preacher of the local Dutch Reformed Church to bury him. But upon hearing that the coloured members of the minister’s church will also be attending the funeral, the DRC members refuse to host this funeral in their church and the widower is forced to find another church in which to hold the funeral (News from Stellenbosch University, 2011).

uncertainties, one of which was whether the residents of this community would be able to keep their surrounding space white.

The primary school used to have only 70 pupils before 1994. The government wanted to close the school because it had too few pupils. They were talking about making it a coloured school. This was a problem for us. This is a white neighbourhood, and the school is right in the middle of this neighbourhood, and right down the street from our church. After the election in 1994 we had little choice. We had to allow coloured people into the school. And so in 1995 the first coloured pupils enrolled. That first year there was about 8 or 10. From there on it became more and more each year until they had to use a bus to bring them from Grand Views [a coloured town about 7 kilometres away] to the school. Now there are about 330 pupils in total. More than half of them are coloured (Male respondent, 60).

Based on this story it became evident to me that, ideally, the residents of this community wanted to keep it an exclusively white space. The transition and attempts by the government to turn this into a coloured school were troubling for this community, and brought with it many uncertainties. But finally they had little choice in the matter. The school could not exclude coloured students any longer. Yet, although the school is racially mixed now, the surrounding neighbourhood and the church down the street from the school have remained exclusively white. Every morning a busload of students is driven into this neighbourhood and dropped off at school, and every afternoon they leave in exactly the same fashion. The schoolyard seems to have remained the only shared space.

The school in my research area proved to be a setting where white and coloured children shared the same space – being in the same classrooms and members of the same team on the sports field. For the purposes of this study it was decided not to conduct an in-depth study of school children and the schoolyard, for this seemed to be a large enough project to justify its very own study. Thus, due to time and space constraints, not to mention the ethical implications of studying children, it was decided to simply study the area surrounding the school and draw conclusions from those respondents who used to share

the schoolyard with the racial other and were now old enough to be interviewed as consenting adults. Based on my observations and interviews, I had to conclude that, although these children socialised with each other in the schoolyard and on the sports field, these relationships did not last beyond the school gates. They were kept separate from their lives “out there” in the community, where they interacted with their white friends.

My conclusion resonated with the findings of Tomlinson, who conducted a study in the United States in 1983. He found that ‘pupils in multi-ethnic schools do not appear to form inter-ethnic friendships to any great extent, being “racially aware” and preferring their own groups from an early age, becoming even more ethnocentric at secondary level’ (Woods and Grugeon, 1991:320-321). What this study showed was that, even in integrated schools, the social distance between different racial groups grew as they progressed through school; in other words, the distance widened as the pupils became older. My research subjects, especially those over the age of thirty, could identify with this trend. Those who grew up on farms often told of how they used to play with the coloured children when they were young. But, as they got older, the innocence of such contact and interaction, and the playfulness associated with it, disappeared and the distance between them grew. The relationships of young children would not translate into a social relationship amongst adults, because as adults they knew their place in society and the norms associated with the colour of their skin.

The everyday messages were hard to miss. Being socialised in an all-white neighbourhood, attending an all-white church, having your parents entertain only white friends in their homes, does not go unnoticed by the children growing up in this community. The norms are clearly outlined and communicated, both unintentionally and intentionally. While the act of socialisation is sometimes met with resistance and non-conformity, I found in my research area that the messages conveyed both verbally and through the environment were clear enough to limit resistance from a younger generation. At the end of it all, the child knew what was considered in place and out of place, and race seemed to have remained the deciding factor for such classification.

5.4 Conclusion

The practice of socialisation, as identified above, has been in place for a very long time. It constitutes the everyday knowledge of my research subjects – including morals, values, beliefs and myths. All of these are internalised to form a coherent and objective belief system (Berger and Luckmann, 2002 [1966]:49,50). It is through socialisation by way of communication and imitation that children are ‘taught to behave’ and ‘kept in line’, becoming almost constrained in a general behavioural sense. Behaviour becomes institutionalised in this way, and thus more predictable ways to behave or act diminish (Berger and Luckmann, 2002 [1966]:47). Through interaction in communities, similar experiences and broad corresponding interests are lived and cultivated in order to develop similar mindsets, ultimately to establish what is considered acceptable behaviour (Noble, 2000:21). I found in my own research area that a message of racial exclusivity was subtly communicated through exclusively white neighbourhoods, a church with exclusively white membership, having only white friends over to your home, and the sexual taboo of interracial couples. Racial supremacy, on the other hand, was maintained through the continuity of ‘typical roles’ – coloureds and blacks used for menial labour, employed as domestic workers, gardeners and farm workers. I have to agree with Jansen (2008:62), who argues that these messages have been transmitted uninterruptedly ‘over the period of transition despite the spectacular changes in the formal institutions of democracy’.

In this chapter, the habitus and the role of socialisation to keep the past alive in the present have been discussed. In the light of South African history and the role of socialisation it becomes all too clear that sudden changes in government and the constitution had no chance of completely erasing the past – not in this particular habitus. In the words of Patterson (2002:340), ‘the prejudices of centuries die hard, and even when they wane, the institutional frameworks that sustained them are bound to linger’.

What can be concluded on the basis of my own fieldwork is that the forces of socialisation are unstoppable in keeping the past, and particularly beliefs about the racial other, alive in the present – specifically in a country where the transition was limited to the political sphere and ultimately failed to transform the general economic and social sphere. But this begs the question: If the habitus perpetuates itself, strengthens itself

through unquestioned “taken-for-grantedness”, is any change within this system, specifically regarding the view of the racial other, possible at all? Reich and Adcock (1976:50) are of the opinion that ‘one tends to feel helpless when attempting to change a person with a strong prejudice. Most efforts at changing such attitudes and behaviour seem pitiful in their ineffectiveness’. Is this the case for my research area? Will attempts to change my research subjects’ attitudes be ‘pitiful in their ineffectiveness’? Noble (2000:1) argues that, however immovable or unchangeable it may look, any structure is ‘subject to alteration, adaptation, slow erosion or radical upheaval’. Such adaptations or alterations could possibly arise ‘in the light of experience and observation’ (Noble, 2000:14). When I asked one of my male respondents (30 years old) if we can bring change to the general racial views, his answer was optimistic, at least in a sense: ‘Yes we can change it, with time, lots and lots of time.’

Upon further investigation and interpretation of my own research I realised that alteration and adaptation are possible within a deeply ingrained or institutionalised. I had been a witness to such adaptation on the farms and in the community where I conducted my research. But these witnessed alterations and adaptations justify a chapter in itself. Thus, the following chapter will focus specifically on the relationship between white farmers and their coloured workers – a relationship that has often been described as paternalistic. In this chapter it will be argued, based on the evidence gathered during fieldwork, that traditional paternalism on the farm has been altered and adapted to the point where it has taken on a neo-paternalistic form – not only indicating a transformation from the old to the new, but also the possibility of change.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

About six months after the completion of Project Paint, the local DRC released a DVD documenting the highlights of the project. I personally thought that it would be interesting to see how this project was portrayed by the church. The DVD contained a message from the preacher (giving background information on the project), some footage of District 30 and its residents, and before and after photos. What I found very interesting about the DVD was its soundtrack. The music used was exclusively by David Kramer, and one particular song was used at least three times while District 30 and its residents filled the screen: ‘*Swaar dit is swaar, swaar om ‘n weeskind te wees*’ (Hard it is hard, hard to be an orphan). In the light of this song I had to conclude that the motives for fixing up District 30 were probably best summed up in one particular quote: ‘These people are so poor, and you cannot lift yourself up by your bootstraps ... someone has to help you’ (Male, late 50s). From viewing the residents of District 30 as orphans – children who needed to be taken care of by the white community, to the colour of their newly painted homes – soft pastel colours normally associated with a kindergarten or a baby’s bedroom, all of these seemed to resonate with paternalism – a term that has been used by many authors⁷¹ to describe the relationship between white farmers and their coloured workers, specifically in South Africa.

According to Orton, Barrientos and McClenaghan (2001:469), ‘[p]aternalist employment relations have a long tradition in South African deciduous fruit production’. The paternalist employment relations that seem to characterise the farmer-worker relationship in the deciduous fruit industry of the Western Cape originated during colonialism and the use of slave labour, thus dating back to the 17th century, when slaves were brought in from West Africa and the Dutch East Indies to work in the newly planted fruit orchards of the Dutch (Orton et al, 2001:470). After the abolishment of slavery in 1834, this

⁷¹ See Du Toit (1993), Ewert and Hamman (1999) and Orton et al (2001), amongst others.

relationship persisted due to a ‘lack of economic opportunities [that] kept many freed slaves bound to the farms in return for the use of land, a small cash wage, or more commonly for housing, food, drink and clothing’ (Orton et al, 2001:470). Thus, the paternalistic culture that had formed persisted as ‘a set of interdependent racial power relations in which workers who were obedient and reliable were looked after by the farmer’ (Orton et al, 2001:470). Workers generally ‘depend[ed] on the farm for every aspect of their material survival: money, housing water, electricity’, to the point where ‘[t]o lose your job ... is to lose your home’ (Du Toit, 1993:315). Through these paternalistic relations, the life on the farm was characterised by blurring of ‘the boundaries between social and labour relations’, where no formal management systems existed and ‘labour relations were highly personalised and informal’ (Orton et al, 2001:470). According to Du Toit (1993:316), this relationship ‘brought dependence and vulnerability’.⁷²

6.2 Paternalism: Continuity and change

Paternalism can be defined as being ‘primarily an economic institution concerned with the manner of organizing a productive unit and regulating relationships between subordinates and the owners of the means of production or their agents’ (Abercrombie and Hill, 1976:413). For Du Toit (1993:314), and here he was referring specifically to paternalism in the agricultural sector, traditional paternalism ‘is distinguished by an “organic” conception of the farm as a family, with the farmer occupying a central position of unchallengeable authority’. Historically it has always been the coloured family that formed the ‘core unit of employment on Western Cape fruit farms ... who resided as well as worked on the farm’ (Orton et al, 2001:470). In this relationship, the farmer assumes a fatherly role, while the workers become the dependants. The existence of these role assignments was evident when one farmer told me, while laughing out loud, ‘if you’re a farmer it’s expected of you to be able to do everything (Male respondent,

⁷² This resonates with Goffman’s total institutions – defined as ‘a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life’ (Davies, 1989:77). Within total institutions, the barriers that usually separate the ‘various spheres of life’ are broken down until ‘all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority’ (Davies, 1989:77).

mid-40s). Indeed, he was the father of his workers, he looked after them, and he did everything *for* them.

During my observations I soon became aware of this close relationship between the white farmers and their permanent coloured workers. From the relationship between the ‘*baas*’ (the farmer or ‘boss’) and his foreman (a position below that of manager, usually occupied by an older coloured male), to the relationship between the ‘*miesies*’ (the farmer’s wife) and her domestic worker (a role usually occupied by a coloured female who resides on the farm), it becomes evident that, although an extremely unequal relationship, there is an ‘understanding’ between these people. This inherent understanding between the two parties can be ascribed to the constructed hierarchy of the farmer as the authoritative, fatherly figure, with his coloured workers assuming the role of dependants or children – ‘a *plaasnasie* [farm nation] who do not have a sense of responsibility [and] constantly needs to be checked up on’ (Farmer, 40 years of age). Thus, in its essence, this understanding refers to ‘the mutual recognition and acceptance by everyone involved of all the obligations, rights, benefits and duties that membership of the farm community brings’ (Du Toit, 1993:321). This unique bond has also been identified by Devereux and Solomon (2011:10), who ascribe it to ‘[t]he fact that many farm worker families have lived on the same farm for generations’. But more so, the relationship between the farmer and his coloured workers seems to be a ‘do as you are told’ relationship, where the ‘understanding’ rather refers to a clear understanding of ‘who is the boss here’ (Du Toit, 1993:323). It is for this reason that Sylvain (2001:717,718) refers, in my opinion more accurately, to paternalism as ‘the institution of “*baasskap*”’ (literally “boss-ship”, authority, dominance). For Sylvain (2001:717), this is an institution driven by an ideological commitment to racial inferiority and, as a result, it ‘keeps a fundamental denial of equality central to their [the farmers’] relationship with their workers’ (Sylvain, 2001:723).

This sense of *baasskap*, and the ‘do-as-you-are-told’ understanding that accompanies it, was particularly illuminated to me by one of my female respondents (a farmer’s wife in her late 50s). She recalled how both she and her husband told their coloured farm workers to vote for the National Party in the 1994 democratic elections. Due to problems of

illiteracy they simplified the instructions by verbally coaching their workers for weeks before the election to vote for the National Party. On the day of the election, she and her husband went to the local town hall early to make their cross and also to see the order of the parties listed on the ballot. Returning to the farm, and just before they sent off a truckload of coloured workers to perform the same ritual, they informed their workers that the National Party was listed second from the bottom on the ballot – this being next to a picture of a smiling F.W. de Klerk. ‘Second from the bottom, draw your cross second from the bottom. That’s what we told them.’ One domestic worker unfortunately got confused on the day and came back to work proclaiming that she drew her cross second from the top (securing at least one vote for the Soccer Party). Let us not forget that the National Party even managed to gather ‘a substantial coloured support base’ (Van der Westhuizen, 2007:44), something I now suspect may have involved the influence of white farmers on their coloured workers. But what this story illustrated to me was the authority of the farmer and his wife over their coloured workers, and how the workers surrendered their voice, keeping the do-as-you-are-told relationship alive and well.

Another important element of paternalism is the gift-relationship that exists between the farmer and his workers. According to Abercrombie and Hill (1976:418), paternalism is characterised by a difference in power relations, as it refers to ‘unequal access to resources’ mainly due to the fact that the paternalist ‘provides resources which subordinates would be unable to find on their own, which is the basis of their dependence’. Thus, for some farmers it involves providing old clothes, assistance with expenses such as school fees or medical expenses, providing transport to town or school, etc. One of my older female respondents who resides on a farm told me about a lunch that was organised for coloured women working in the local old-age home. She was surprised by ‘how nicely these women were dressed’:

You know, we don’t realise that it’s not good enough anymore to give your old clothes to them. They all have accounts now to buy themselves new clothes. The other day we had a sale where we sold all the things that we don’t use anymore, clothes and accessories and so on. But I’m telling you, if there is just a button missing or a small hole in the fabric, they don’t want it. We used to think that these old things were good enough for them.

This story illuminated a number of interesting occurrences within the traditional paternalistic institution. What is immediately identified is that handing out old clothes to coloured workers used to be an acceptable tradition for both parties involved (signifying the gift-relationship), but due to economic empowerment these workers now have accounts at the store and can buy themselves new clothes – illuminating a possible change in the traditional paternalistic relationship. This respondent was very surprised that these hand-downs were ‘not good enough’ for the workers anymore. What was witnessed was the continued perception of the traditional paternalistic relationship by the white woman, yet there was a deviation from this relationship on the part of the coloured workers. These are people who once supposedly needed to be taken care of, and now the relationship seemed to have changed.

For Bradford, as quoted in Orton et al (2001:470), paternalism is not divorced from racism, but rather ‘combines the harshness of racism with the adoption of some of the benevolence of familial figures of authority’. Sylvain (2001) draws the same conclusion. Sylvain (2001:728) describes *baasskap* as ‘European economic domination combined with the racist values and practices of apartheid’. For Sylvain (2001:717), this institution is ‘the most deeply hegemonic principle of inequality that gives race and class relationships their distinctive form’. It is an institution driven by an ideological commitment to racial inferiority and, as a result, it ‘keeps a fundamental denial of equality central to their [farmers’] relationship with their workers’ (Sylvain, 2001:723). But the last 20 years have borne witness to significant changes in the farming industry of the Western Cape. In the 1990s there was substantial pressure that forced farmers to institute labour reforms, as ‘constitutional and legal changes granted farm workers rights for the first time in South African history’ (Orton et al, 2001:473). The period from 1993 to 1998 marked the development and implementation of progressive labour legislation that ‘set out the rights and responsibilities of farm workers and farmers ... and has helped define more formalised employment relations’ (Orton et al, 2001:473). Various workers’ organisations, and specifically trade unions, have begun to disrupt the traditional conditions on the farm (Orton et al, 2001:473). Through this legislation, farmers have ceased to be ‘the sole authority on farms, and are more accountable to the law ... and expectations in their treatment of workers’ (Orton et al, 2001:473).

Although Du Toit (1993:314) predicted the demise of paternalism with the introduction of new labour laws and trade unions to protect the rights of the workers in a post-apartheid South Africa, this institution seems to have persisted.⁷³ According to Orton et al (2001:472-473), despite significant changes in the legal framework, '[b]roader structures of political power remained unaltered'.⁷⁴ Although the conditions on the farms have improved in the light of new labour legislation, the workers 'remain dependent upon, and under the sole authority of the farmer' (Orton et al, 2001:473). This corresponds with the findings of Ewert and Hamman (1999:202), who found that, despite changes in the legal framework, the power relations between farmers and their workers remain 'visibly unequal [as] in most cases the farmer still determines unilaterally, working rules, wages and housing conditions'. Ewert and Hamman (1999:202) label this 'neo-paternalism' – a situation where the relationship between white farmers and their coloured workers is 'regulated to some extent by state legislation, but still imbued by the spirit of paternalism'. For Ewert and Hamman (1999:209), 'the influences of modernity were not sufficiently corrosive to dissolve the paternalist glue for good'.

For me, Project Paint illustrated a clear aspect of the paternalistic relationship between white farmers, but also other white members of the community, and coloured workers. The entire project rested on the principle of giving to those who cannot help themselves. As one of the volunteers remarked on the day: 'We should really work at improving their quality of life' (Female, early 50s). This statement clearly reflects the belief that these coloured residents could not do anything for themselves. They needed a helping hand from the white community – the caretakers or the givers. It was clear that the racial roles were assigned: whites as the givers and caretakers, coloureds as the takers and children 'who cannot lift themselves up by their bootstraps'. This corresponds with the argument

⁷³ While the deregulation and restructuring of the local industry have resulted in cost cuts – mainly the reduction of the permanent labour force on the farm, instead making use of casual or seasonal labour, more stringent ethical requirements from international buyers and legislation implemented as a result of national democratisation (including, but not limited to, a wide range of labour legislation, social and land rights), have prompted the modification and adaptation of the paternalistic institution (Du Toit and Ally, 2003:19; Ewert and Du Toit, 2005:321,324).

⁷⁴ It could well be argued that these changes and improvements on the farms were economically or financially motivated and were not representative of a sudden change of attitude toward the workers. Similar to F.W. de Klerk, these farmers may have opted for pragmatism rather than having had a 'road to Damascus' experience.

presented by Du Toit (1993:322). He argues that ‘the farmer’s obligations to the worker are institutionalised in the form of a “gift relationship” [and that] the farmer’s bounty supposedly flows out of his generosity and goodness’. The residents of District 30 needed the helping hand of their white paternalists, for, ‘[l]ike children, they are dependent’ (Orton et al, 2001:470). And like children they were treated: ‘I don’t think you can do something like this and expect something in return’ (Male, 60s). Like children, these coloured residents of District 30 needed someone else to look after their things *for* them, because the perception was that they were simply unable to look after these themselves. Like children, they lacked this particular kind of responsibility. But let us not lose sight of the fact that some farmers were unwilling to participate in this project, regarding it as a waste of time and money on an undeserving, irresponsible group of people. They refused to participate in any gift-giving relationship, as they considered their efforts to go to waste on this group of people. Thus, there are exceptions to this relationship, and this does signify changes within the paternalistic institution in my research area.

Seventeen years after South Africa’s first democratic elections that brought with it the promise of new labour laws and a possible change in the labour structure in order to empower the worker, I have to agree with Du Toit (1993:315), who argued that ‘[f]or all its modernity ... there are also deep continuities with the past’. While new labour laws have been implemented and may, to some extent, have brought along with them a modernising influence, ‘patterns of control and dependency continue to structure farmer-worker relations, and cannot be swept away overnight’ (Orton et al, 2001:473). This particular relationship seems to be representative of ‘400 years of legalised inequality between white, coloured, and black communities’, and is thus particularly difficult to overturn (Orton et al, 2001:474). It represents a continuity of apartheid South Africa into a post-apartheid context.

6.3 Everyday racism

For both Sylvain (2001:728) and Bradford, as quoted in Orton et al (2001:470), racism forms an integral part of the paternalistic relationship. Taking this aspect of paternalism into account, it seems that the survival of paternalism, or at least some form of it, on the farms in post-apartheid South Africa resonates with the argument proposed by Critical

Race Theory. The theory argues that racism is not reduced to ‘personal prejudices’, but rather involves ‘social processes which discriminate against others on the basis of their being associated with different racial or ethnic group membership’ (Essed, 2002:203, 205). This type of racism, referred to as ‘everyday racism’ by Essed (2002:204), becomes ‘fused into familiar practices, practices taken for granted’. For Essed (2002:202-203), everyday racism ‘relates day-to-day experiences of racial discrimination to the macrostructural context of group inequalities ... represented as racial and ethnic hierarchies’. It is here that the strong correlation of race and class in everyday society becomes of key importance again. With such a visible correlation between these two concepts, racism becomes persistent, yet ‘difficult to pinpoint’; it becomes normal, hidden in the mundane practices of the everyday, inspiring ‘attitudes and behaviors sustaining racial injustice’ (Essed, 2002:204). Thus, ‘practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive ... reinforced through routine practices in everyday situations’ (Essed, 2002:208).

For Critical Race Theorists, issues of power are key to the analysis of everyday racism. Essed (2002:204) is of the opinion that everyday racism involves ‘the continuous, often unconscious, exercise of power predicated in taking for granted the privileging of whiteness’. Thus, whiteness becomes an integral part of the argument. According to Garner (2007:52), ‘to divorce analyses of whiteness from power relations that frame it is to commit a cardinal error’. For centuries, white has been ‘the point from which judgments are made’ and, in terms of a physical attribute, whiteness came to represent ‘humanness, normality and universality’ (Garner, 2007:34). As Robinson (2002:99) argues, ‘[w]hiteness is not itself compared with anything, but other things are compared unfavorably with it’.⁷⁵ Frankenberg, as quoted in Harrison (1995:63), defines whiteness as ‘a structural location that confers exclusive privilege, a standpoint from which to view and assess Self and Other, and a set of cultural practices that is usually unmarked, unnamed, and normatively given’. Thus, while white people have the power to label others, they also have the power to label themselves – they are the dominators of the

⁷⁵ Whiteness has always been associated with power. Dyer, as quoted in Garner (2007:34), argues that in film and photography white has always been ‘the framing position: a dominant and normative space against which difference is measured’.

dominated, the superior as opposed to inferior (Garner, 2007:19). Whiteness has meaning and it produces meaning, often determining what you are and what you can be. Indeed, whiteness becomes an avenue through which ‘identities are forged’ (Woodward, 1997:14,29). Within the determination of whiteness there is also a definite sense of social exclusion, as, based on the characteristics discussed above, the us/them duality becomes readily available to exploit (Woodward, 1997:29).

According to Vestergaard (2001:20), and here it is worth quoting at length, the Afrikaner identity in association with apartheid South Africa ‘was based on values of God-fearing Calvinism, structures of patriarchal authority, adherence to traditions invented by the nationalist movement, conservative values such as the fundamental importance of the nuclear family and heterosexuality, and, above all, the importance of whiteness’. Amongst my own research subjects I found many of these aspects of Afrikaner identity still intact. The patriarchal authority was both evident in the household and, as discussed above, on the farm. Conservative values and the nuclear family were evident regarding the crossing of boundaries that acted as a divide between whites and the racial other in my research area, which was undeniably linked to the importance of whiteness and its taken-for-granted position at the top of the racial hierarchy.

According to Suttles (1972:188), ‘[t]he functions of territoriality and distancing [the creation and maintenance of boundaries, in other words] in human societies are to preserve people from the prospect of insult or injury’. It became evident that boundaries played an important part as a form of conserving whiteness within my community of research. But this should come as no surprise. Historically, the conservation of Afrikaner identity has always been a high priority. From the Great Trek, during which Afrikaners ‘segregate[d] themselves from the pressures that bedeviled them ... in order to maintain their newly discovered group identity’; to the Anglo-Boer War and its aftermath – the creation of Afrikaner Nationalism; to the apartheid state, which was presented as a necessary and justified step for the survival of Afrikaners, conserving and protecting their identity has always taken precedence (De Villiers, 1988:24, 175, 367). For De Witt and Booysen (1995:1), ‘[t]he process of socialization is essential, not only for the survival and development of the individual, but also for maintaining society’. In Chapters 4 and 5

it was illustrated how my research subjects use socialisation both intentionally and unintentionally to ensure the survival of their identity. It was also illustrated how pressures to conform to these communicated values and beliefs were evident among my research subjects, for '[a] society will survive only as long as its members act in concert to support and maintain it' (De Witt and Booysen, 1995:2). It is an effective way of creating what Ballard (2004:54) refers to as 'identity-affirming spaces'.

I have to conclude that an important, and also very large, part of 'the Afrikaner identity associated with apartheid South Africa' was still intact in my research area. This identity had survived and it represented the most important continuity beyond 1994 to be found in my research area – representing the basis of all other continuities found. While Steyn (2001:xxi, xxii) argues that Afrikaners 'are engaged in one of the most profound collective psychological adjustments happening in the contemporary world', facing a complete reinterpretation of their old selves 'in the light of new knowledge', I found my research subjects to be somewhat untouched by such an identity crisis. While some changes had taken place since the 1994 elections, much was still the same for them – of that they had made sure. As Sartre, cited in Douglas (1966:162), once argued:

[i]t is simply the old yearning for impermeability ... there are people who are attracted to the permanence of stone. They would like to be solid and impenetrable, they do not want change: for who knows what change might bring?

What comes to mind in this situation is the persistence of aggregates, as propagated by Pareto. In order to cope with unpredictability, Pareto (cited in Noble, 2000:110) argued that 'we are constitutionally inclined ... to maintain established structures of ideas and action, [and] to continue with familiar routines'. This is a basic human instinct to ensure familiarity and manageability (Noble, 2000:110).

6.4 Conclusion

According to Goldberg (1993:9), 'racist culture has been one of the central ways modern social subjects make sense of and express themselves about the world they inhabit and invent; it has been key in their responding to that world they conjointly make'. It has been used to preserve power and authority and it has been used to reserve space by drawing clear-cut boundaries. All in all, it has been used to both claim and maintain the

superior position in the social hierarchy. Racism has evolved from an intended strategy to the point of becoming normalised in the structures of society. In the words of Guess (2006:651-652), 'it constitute[d] a gradual shift away from a conscious, almost personalized conviction of the inferiority of an "othered" race ... expressing itself in attitudes of prejudice' visible in everyday discriminatory behaviour and deeply institutionalised discriminatory practices, which are 'not necessarily triggered by intent'. Lawrence (1995:237) is in agreement and argues that 'most of us are unaware of our racism', unable to recognise 'the ways in which our cultural experience has influenced our beliefs about race or the occasion on which those beliefs affect our actions'. Similarly, I found that most of my respondents were completely ignorant of their degrading or discriminatory tones when speaking of the racial "other". Like Schutte (1995:241), I found that most of my respondents 'saw themselves as a friendly, hospitable people ... Christians' who are, in their own eyes, 'decent, honest, and kind people who loved their fellow men'. They failed to recognise the racism deeply embedded in the structures of their relations of production, or in their community in general.

Today, as we struggle to create a non-racial South Africa, the country is still plagued by notions of race and essentialist cultural identity. According to Dubow (1992:236), this 'alert[s] us to the residual salience of an ideology which, though wholly discredited, continues to exercise a significant influence over events'. The idea that many South Africans are racists, maybe not openly or maybe unaware of it, is especially propagated by Fisher (2007:1), who is not only of the opinion that most South Africans are racists, but admits to being a racist himself. His reason? He believes, growing up in South Africa, '[he] is a racist because [his] entire life [he] has been groomed to become one' (Fisher, 2007:1). Indeed, decades of racial separation have taken their toll, convincing many of us that we are inherently different. Many of those who are currently living in a post-apartheid South Africa grew up in a time when race and racism dominated society. With such a background, the question is not why race would continue to dominate our society, but rather why would it not? (Fisher, 2007:2).

Schutte (1995:185) is of the opinion that ‘the pattern of human relations and the meanings that underpin it are prestructured – [i]t is a pattern that has been repeated for generations ... it is lasting and permanent’. In this sense it becomes clear that the roles to be played have become pre-constructed and pre-defined; they have become controlled and predictable (Berger and Luckmann, 2002 [1966]:49). This resonates with Bourdieu’s (2003 [1977]:167) idea of the structuring structures to be found within the habitus, and where one is ultimately, yet subtly, coerced to act in accordance with preconceived and predestined social norms. The cycles of the habitus and the norms and values it maintains become taken for granted and survive mainly for always having been that way – ‘it goes without saying because it comes without saying’ (Bourdieu, 2003 [1977]:167). The existence of freedom of choice thus comes under scrutiny and one becomes tempted to agree with Giddens (2002:222), who is of the opinion that ‘people are not entirely free to choose their own actions’. For it is as Noble (2000:158) argues: ‘[w]e live in a society we did not make. Our very ideas are shaped by the society we were born into ... our choices and hopes are influenced by circumstances, of which we are not always aware’. Thus, in agreement with Bourdieu (2003 [1977]:76) and based on my own findings, I have to argue that ‘the world of practicality can grant only conditional freedom’.

In analysing the actions of our subjects we often proceed to assume that ‘whatever an actor does ... he could have done something different, and did what he did because he “decided” to do it’ (Fuchs, 2001:102). But in the light of my own argument, such reasoning may prove to be flawed. My own reasoning, in this case, rather follows that of Marx, who wrote, ‘[m]en make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past’ (Davies, 2004:58). Thus, I have to arrive at the conclusion that ‘all social reproduction and/or transformation occurs under conditions and relations inherited from the past’ (Davies, 2004:86). This is where the ‘uneasy definition of freedom’ arises (Fuchs, 2001:102). It appears that, however free our choices may appear, they are constrained by history, by our upbringing, and by our circumstances. As Noble (2000:9) argues, it is very possible to view individuals as being only ‘what society made [them] ... creatures of [their] era’. They are

indeed ‘the product of their time, their upbringing, [and] their social origins’ (Noble, 2000:21).

The knowledge transmitted through socialisation in my research area greatly inhibits freedom of choice. It is a knowledge that has survived its past to inform the present. It is a knowledge that has remained largely undisturbed by political and legal change. To claim that South Africa’s present stands in complete isolation from its past would be absurd. The legacy of our apartheid past is visible in my research area every day. Therefore, I will argue, like Davies (2004) does, that the past plays an immutable and constant role in the present and that it is still shaping values, beliefs and attitudes in a very significant way.

My study focused on the relationship of white people with coloured people in my research area. During my fieldwork I witnessed the racial schism in this area – some of it intended, others simply by consequence. I found that, within the group of whites that I studied, attitudes toward coloured people varied. Some of my subjects crossed boundaries to an extent, while others were reluctant to do so. Some requested that their coloured domestic worker be buried in the ‘white’ DRC, while others strongly opposed such an event. But, what I found was that, in general, the continuities of the past, meaning apartheid South Africa, were still to be found in a post-apartheid context. The social boundaries were firmly in place to keep the racial other at a distance – seemingly in order to reserve a white space and to protect a community from possible defilement. But there were instances where these boundaries were breached, confronting my research subjects with new forms of racial interaction within their community. Some were more accepting of a shift in these boundaries than others. In this regard I have to conclude that the transition did somewhat disrupt the identity of my research subjects. In fact, I may have borne witness to a subtle renegotiation of norms – tiny steps taken towards change. Let us also not lose sight of the fact that there are individuals who have crossed the racial barrier, even if the act was met by a negative judgment from the community. On the farms, labour practices had to change due to new legislation, and the relationship between the farmer and his workers was altered slightly. Although the institution of paternalism remains largely intact on the farms, it has been modified and adapted in the post-

apartheid era to take on a new form, explained here as neo-paternalism. Indeed, while many remnants of an apartheid past can be found in my research area, subtle changes are visible – as one of my respondents remarked, things will change ‘with time, lots and lots of time’.

Finally, it is not that the identity of my research subjects was not disrupted by the transition, but rather that they have done all they can, in the light of that disruption, to preserve their identity through the persistence of boundaries and by communicating the same messages as before through socialisation, thus prolonging the breakdown of existing beliefs and norms regarding the racial other. If my research has illuminated one central theme, it is worth repeating here what was argued in the first chapter: ‘[o]ld myths never die. Nor do they fade away. Not, certainly, if they are related to “race”’ (Montagu, 1997 [1942]:155).

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